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# **THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AN OUTLINE**

By

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***To  
My Mentor  
Sri Nisith Ranjan Ray***



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Indian national movement has been a favourite subject with historians, Indian and foreign, both before and after 1947. Quite a number of important books have been written on the subject, the most notable among recent works being Dr. R. C. Majumdar's *History Of the Freedom Movement In India* in three volumes. But there is always room for more on such an inviting subject of wide and absorbing interest, particularly for a brief and balanced account of the movement for the students and general readers. The need of such a book in a brief compass has long been felt. In that respect this little monograph is possibly the first of its kind. I have attempted to give a simple but analytical account of the Indian national movement. This, I hope, will help the readers to be familiar with the outline of the movement and will arouse their interest in the more exhaustive and learned works on the subject.

I am indebted to Dr. P. C. Gupta, Head of the Department of History, Jadavpur University, for encouraging me to undertake the work and for his valuable suggestions. I am also thankful to Sri Bimalaprosad Mukherjee, Reader in History, Jadavpur University, and Sri Ratanlal Chatterjee for helping me in many ways.

NEMAI SADHAN BOSE

Ramkrishnapur,  
Howrah,  
March, 1965.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The book has been thoroughly revised and enlarged. Considerable amount of additional material has been added and the results of recent researches have been incorporated. The Select Reading List has been brought upto date.

I am indebted to my friends and colleagues whose thoughtful criticism and suggestions have helped me in improving the book, both in content and quality. Sri Dwijendranath Bose of Ananda Press and Publications has taken personal interest in the printing of the book. Sri Sobhon Bose and Sri Supratik Bose have prepared the index and have helped me in various ways. But they do not care for any formal thanksgiving.

NEMAI SADHAN BOSE

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## CHAPTER I

### THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

✓ The dearth of a unifying sense of nationalism and patriotic feelings was one of the cogent contributing factors to the foundation and consolidation of the British rule in India. It may justly be said that before the nineteenth century the people in general were mostly callous and indifferent to political changes. There was no sense of unity, no conception of India as a nation or of Indians as a race. There was neither any public opinion nor any forum to express and ventilate grievances. Even in the beginning of the nineteenth century signs of political consciousness in the country were hardly evident. No organised attempt was made to resist the Government's repressive measures, tyranny and merciless exploitation. Of course there was resistance against the British and there was reaction against the British rule. Signs of discontent and disaffection were discernible. But the struggles of various rulers and chieftains against the British rule did not have a nationalist character. These lacked genuine patriotic feelings and they did not have the broader object of the deliverance of the whole country from the foreign yoke. (More laudable and heroic were the struggles of the weavers and *malangis*, the peasants' revolt against Debi Singha, Agent of the Zamindar of Dinajpore, the peasants' revolt in Bankura, the Choar revolt (1799) in Midnapore, the Sannyasi revolt (c. 1760—c. 1800) in northern Bengal and later the Kol rebellion in Chota Nagpur. These revolts, obviously lacking in patriotic

fervour and outlook, were caused by economic factors and were more spontaneous in character. Though void of any national colouring these revolts revealed a discontent against the exploitation and unbearable tyranny of the Company's Government and its officers.

**Factors contributing to the growth of Indian nationalism in the 19th Century**      The growth of political consciousness, leading to the birth of the Indian national movement for independence was one of the salient features of the nineteenth century Indian awakening. Significantly, the alien rule itself was basically responsible for the growth of Indian nationalism, as it is only natural for a subjugated country to aspire after and fight for freedom. Broadly speaking, nationalism in India was the product of Western impact. It was Western knowledge and education that provided the intellectual background to Indian nationalism. Study of European history and literature made the educated Indians familiar with the prevailing spirit of democracy, nationalism and liberalism of Europe. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the ideas of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume and others began to reach the Indian shores. These made a profound influence on the inquisitive and responsive Bengali middle-class mind. It was Bengal where the British rule was first established and English education was first introduced. So it was only natural that Bengal was the vanguard in the growth of political consciousness and agitations in India in the nineteenth century. The growth of political consciousness and the beginning of the national movement in the nineteenth century may be attributed to a number of other factors.

**Frustration of educated Indians**      The spread of English education and the foundation of the Universities had great influence on the young generation of Indians. The Universities were producing every year capable, brilliant, educated youngmen with ambition and aspirations. But suitable employments were not yet available in plenty. The principle of "Indianisation" of service was accepted

as early as in 1833. A clause of the Act of 1833 provided that "No Native of the said Territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company". The same principle was re-affirmed in the Proclamation of 1858, where it was stated that "so far as may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge." But these declarations practically remained dead letters. Educated Indians found the doors to higher offices barred. The British Government was reluctant to associate Indians with the administration at its highest level. Even in the lesser services the experience of the Indians was mostly unhappy. They suffered from a sense of humiliation and frustration which soon transformed into one of opposition to the foreign rule.) One such notable example was the life of Surendranath Banerjee. The latter had passed the Civil Service Examination in 1869 but was consequently discharged from the Civil Service on trivial grounds. The real cause of Surendranath's dismissal was that the English officials still did not like to have Indians within their close preserve. (His dismissal hurt the feelings of the Indians and was a rude shock to the aspirations of Indians to have a share in the administration of their own country.) In his famous autobiographical work *A Nation in Making* Surendranath writes, "I felt with all the passionate warmth of youth that we were helots, hewers of wood and drawers of water in the land of our birth. The personal wrong done to me was an illustration of the helpless impotency of our people."

Racial Discrimination and arrogance of Europeans in India

(Racial discrimination was a major factor behind the growth of Indian nationalism in the nineteenth century. An increasing irritation and sense of humiliation caused by racial discrimination accelerated the progress of the Indian freedom

movement. The arrogance and aggressiveness of the Europeans in India, often displayed in the crudest form, the numerous privileges and exemptions enjoyed by them and the impunity with which they could humiliate, assault or even murder the natives of the country) they had conquered served (as painful reminders to the small but potent and influential class of educated Indians of their state of subjection to an alien rule) however benevolent it otherwise professed and appeared to be.

Contemporary  
international  
events

(The current of nationalist ideas in Europe and the international political events also contributed to the making of Indian nationalism. The American War of Independence, the great French Revolution and the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Greek War of Independence, the struggle of the Italians for independence and unification stirred the imagination of the Indians)

Modernisation  
of transport  
and communi-  
cations

The establishment of a highly centralised administration had also its cementing effect. The improvement in communications, increasing travelling facilities, the adoption of English as the medium of communications by the intelligentsia, increasing social contacts between the people of the different provinces gave a "new meaning" to the words "India" and "Indians". (On the growth of Indian nationalism Lala Lajpat Rai wrote that "the methods of the English Government in India, their educational system, their press, their laws, their courts, their railways, their telegraphs, their post offices, their steamers, had as much to do with it as the native love of country")

The Press

(The rapid growth of the press, particularly the vernacular press, accelerated the growth of national consciousness.) Besides fostering the growth of Indian nationhood the press started enlightening the people and largely influenced, as well as directed the course of the national struggle. (From the early nineteenth century the number of newspapers and journals in India began to increase rapidly. By the end of the century there were

more than five hundred newspapers in India. Some of the notable among these were *Sambad Prabhakar*, *Hindu Patriot*, *Indian Mirror*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Bengalee*, *Somprokash*, *Sulabh Samachar*, *Reis and Rayat* in Bengal, *Voice of India*, *Native Opinion*, *Bombay Samachar*, *Indu Prakash*, *Jam-e-Jamshed*, *Mahratta*, *Kesari* in Bombay, *Hindu*, *Swadeshmitram* in Madras and later the *Herald* in Bihar, the *Advocate* in Lucknow and the *Tribune* in Lahore.

Most of the nationalist leaders had their own forum. In many cases they were the editors and in some cases they were the proprietor-editors. It is significant that the invitees to the first Indian National Congress (1885) included a conspicuously large number of "journalist politicians". The link between Indian nationalism and Indian journalism was very close and almost inseparable.

**Deteriorating economic condition** The economic condition of the country had been in the meantime deteriorating. Increasing Indian poverty became alarming. Famines occurred almost regularly and the Government did little to mitigate the peoples' sufferings. The steady "drain" of wealth had impoverished India. Many Indians, as Coupland observes, "came to believe that it would have been better that India's natural resources should have been lain untouched and undeveloped until Indians had acquired the capacity to exploit them entirely by themselves." This feeling led to a reaction against the British rule even among those who had been its admirer for a longtime. The British economic policy leading to ruination of flourishing Indian trade and industry and impoverishment of the people was bitterly criticised by Dadabhai Naoroji in the 1870s. This was the theme of his famous work, published later, entitled *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. The condition of the cultivators was also worsening which was exposed in the works of men like Romesh Chunder Dutt.

**Literature** The growing spirit of patriotism found expression in contemporary Indian literature which in turn immensely helped the cause of Indian nationalism. Significant contribution, to mention only a

few, was made by Bankimchandra Chatterjee—the composer of *Bandemataram*, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Dinabandhu Mitra, Rangalal Banerjee, Hemchandra Banerjee, Nabin Chandra Sen and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali, Bharatendu Harischandra in Hindi, Subramania Bharati in Tamil and G. H. Desmukh, Visnusastry Ciplonkar and Sivaram Mahadev Paranjpe in Marathi literature. The effects of English literature and Western philosophy on the educated Indians were not insignificant.) As a vernacular paper remarked, “It is their Wilberforces, Hampdens, Mills, Brights, Metcalfes, Macaulays, and hundreds of other great men, whose liberal principles have captivated us, and we have regarded them as the very model of morality, and hold them in veneration.”

Beginning of Indology (The growth of Indian nationalism owed much to the beginning of researches in ancient Indian history and civilization. The beginning was made with the foundation of the Asiatic Society in 1784.) For an awakening of interest and curiosity in their own past, which largely infused into the Indians a sense of self-respect, the Asiatic Society founded by Sir William Jones played a conspicuous role. By laying emphasis on rational knowledge the Asiatic Society helped the growth among the Indians of an intelligent understanding of their national culture through scientific research. (The works of William Jones, Prinsep, Cunningham, Max Müller, Wilson Rajendra-lal Mitra and others unearthed and threw a flood of light on India's great heritage and ancient glory.) These instilled into them a buoyant sense of pride and self-confidence. As Dr. Percival Spear writes, “All this attention was to the new class as water in a thirsty land, avid as it was for respect. When it came from the new world of the West, the source at the same time of so much criticism and scorn, it was balm indeed”

Hindu revivalism: The influence of Dayananda Saraswati (To these inspiring revelations were added the spirit of revivalism spread by the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the Theosophic movement.) Dr. B. B.

Majumdar has observed that in the seventies of the last century religious men like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Dayananda "did much more than the Orientalists to make the people proud of their own culture." Dayananda, a great Sanskrit scholar, founded the Arya Samaj. His main motto was "Go back to the Vedas", and he sought to remodel the society on Vedic ideals. He was in favour of drastic social reforms. He began the *Suddhi* movement i.e. conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism. His mission was a great success among the masses in Northern India and he did much to revive the shaken spirit of Hinduism. Dayananda strictly eschewed politics. He argued that the Indians' own failings were responsible for the establishment of foreign rule in India. But gradually his movement began to gather "political undertones" and he contributed to the growth of extremist philosophy.)

The Theosophic movement, started in India by Col. H. S. Olcott and later led by Mrs. Annie Besant, strengthened the Hindu revival movement. The spirit of reawakened Hinduism found reflection in the growth of extremism towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Vivekananda's impact on the growth of nationalism (The success of Swami Vivekananda at Chicago and his inspiring speeches became a source of inspiration to young nationalists. Swamiji took no direct part in politics. But his contribution to the Indian national movement was invaluable. His soul stirring messages put the image of the motherland on a high pedestal. He gave expression to India's growing nationalism and spirit of self-help and independence. He was the very embodiment of courage, self-confidence and strength. His life and speeches inspired the nationalists to be more courageous and stronger and to work for greater success.) "Heaven is nearer through football than through Gita", "What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel. . .", "For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote—this our great Mother India"—words such as these were like molten lava pouring from a volcano to destroy all weakness, cowardice, hesitancy or timidity.



(It is no wonder that Vivekananda's life and teaching had a great impact on the Indian national movement. He has been described as a 'Prophet of Nationalism' and the "Rousseau of India". Swamiji instilled a burning patriotism in the minds of the Indian youths and paved the way for the Swadeshi upsurge of 1905.

The growth of political consciousness leading to the beginning of the national movement for independence was one of the striking trends of the Indian Awakening. The remarkable transformation in the life and thought of the people, the new era of social, religious and educational reforms ushered in by great men of the age naturally accelerated the growth of Indian nationhood.)

### *The Beginning of Organised Political Agitations :*

Raja Rammohun Roy      The origin of national consciousness in India is traced to Raja Rammohun Roy. He is regarded as the "Aristotle" of modern Indian political thought. Raja Rammohun Roy was the first to start political movements on constitutional lines in India. He was influenced by the political thought of Western thinkers. In his paper *Sambad Kaumudi* public grievances found expression for the first time. A man of practical wisdom and foresight he did not raise the question of political rights for all. He frankly said, "The peasantry and the villagers in the interior are quite ignorant, and indifferent about either the former or present Government. But men of aspiring character and members of such ancient families as are very much reduced by the present system, consider it derogatory to accept the trifling public situations which natives are allowed to hold under the British Government, and are decidedly disaffected to it". Though he looked upon the British rule as necessary and beneficial for some time to come, he had the vision of a free India in the distant future.

In 1823 the acting Governor-General Adam issued a Press Ordinance taking away the liberty of the Press.

Agitation  
against  
the Press  
Ordinance  
of 1823

Rammohan started an agitation against this repressive Ordinance. This is regarded as the first constitutional agitation in India. He, with a few of his associates, submitted a Memorial to the Supreme Court against the Ordinance and sent a petition to the King-in-Council. Rammohan wrote: ".....a Free Press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world, because, while men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the supreme Government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed, whereas, where no freedom of the Press existed, and grievances consequently remained unrepresented and unredressed, innumerable revolutions have taken place in all parts of the globe, or if prevented by the armed force of the Government, the people continued ready for insurrection" The Memorial against the Press Ordinance was a remarkable document full of forceful arguments in favour of a free-press. His efforts did not prove successful immediately. As a protest against the Press Ordinance he discontinued the publication of his weekly Persian paper the *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*. The free-press agitation was the first instance of an organised effort to rally the intelligentsia against an encroachment on the rights of the people.

Agitation  
against the  
Jury Act  
(1826)

In 1826 a Jury Act was passed which introduced religious discrimination in the law courts. The Act declared that henceforward any Hindu or Mohammedan could be tried by either Europeans or native Christians, but no Christian, either European or native was to be tried either by a Hindu or a Muslim juror. Rammohun opposed this Act. Through one of his English friends—J. Crawford, he submitted petitions against the Act signed by Hindus and Muslims to both the Houses of the Parliament. The Jury Act also evoked protest from the Muslim, Hindu and Parsi communities of Bombay and petitions on behalf of them were sent to the Parliament. The Act also caused excitement in the

Presidency of Madras. The agitation against the Jury Act proved effective when the Amended Indian Jury Act was passed in August, 1832 abolishing the discriminating clause of the old Jury Act. This agitation was one of the earliest movements on constitutional lines set on foot by politically conscious Indians in the nineteenth century.

Demand for  
more rights  
for the  
Indians

In 1830 Rammohun protested against Government measures to tax rent-free lands. Another important effort of Raja Rammohun was to secure more rights for the Indians at the time of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1833. One of the main objects of his visit to England was to argue against the monopoly rights and other privileges enjoyed by the East India Company in India, and to place before the Parliament a list of other demands. His demands included appointment of native assessors in the Civil Service and the consultation of Indian public opinion before enacting any legislation. The last demand was an indirect reference to the need of an elected Indian legislature. Though most of the demands remained unfulfilled yet he laid the foundation stone of future constitutional agitations in India. Besides these, he strongly refuted the prevailing misconception of persons "degraded by Asiatic effeminacy." In every sphere—religious reforms, social reforms, education, journalism etc. Rammohun was a pioneer. He was the first Indian to have wide international sympathies and contacts. He was deeply interested in contemporary international events. He had a great respect for the ideals of the French Revolution and had unbounded sympathy for the struggles of the Greeks and the Irish people. The failure of the revolution in Naples in 1821 distressed him and the success of the Spanish American Revolution in 1823 elated him. He supported the Reform Bill agitation in England and took keen interest in its progress. He was personally known to many European celebrities of that age. The inaugurator of a new age in India he has also been called "the father of political regeneration in India."

Rammohun's  
international  
sympathies

Political agitations started by Rammohun were continued by a group of radical youngmen in Bengal educated in the Hindu College. It was Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831), the remarkable teacher of the Hindu College, who infused in them the spirit of patriotism. These young radicals, famous as Derozians or the Young Bengal, were well-known for their patriotism and advanced political thinking. Prominent among them were Tarachand Chakravarty, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Rasik Krishna Mallik, Ramgopal Ghose and Pearychand Mitra. Derozio himself was deeply impressed by the French Revolutionary ideas and the political philosophy of Tom Paine, Hume, Gibbon, Bacon and others. Derozio was in favour of liberty in every sphere of life. His students imbibed all the ideas of their teacher. The most important contribution of the Derozians was the successful continuation of the agitation for a free-press started by Rammohun. The movement proved fruitful when in 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe removed the restrictions on the press. They also continued the agitation for Indianisation of high government posts. They were excited and elated by the July Revolution of 1830. Some of them even secretly hoped for the out-break of a similar revolution in India. Between 1830 and 1843 the Young Bengal, through their journals and associations, did much for the growth of political consciousness among the people. In later life many of them played a significant part in the Indian national movement.

Political  
agitations  
continued

The associates of Rammohun also continued the tradition of political agitation. One notable feature of the growing political consciousness was that the middle-class intelligentsia had great admiration for and faith in the British rule. Their loyalty, along with increasing consciousness of their own rights and privileges, remained firm. But a sense of disillusionment and frustration was increasingly noticeable. This was very much so on the question of Indian participation in the administration.

The spirit of organised political opposition began to find expression. Public meetings were organised on the issue of the removal of restrictions on the press. Regular agitation for administrative reforms was started in the press and on the platform. In 1837 the Zamindary Association—Landholders' later renamed as the Landholders' Society (1837) was formed in Bengal. Though this Society was founded to promote the welfare of the landholders yet it did not altogether overlook the interest of the ryots. The Society intended to set up branches throughout India with the object of establishing contact with people outside Bengal having common interest and objectives. The Landholders' Society was one of the earliest of associations in India which sought to work constitutionally for legitimate rights and wished to express public opinions.

The Landholders' Society worked in co-operation with the British India Society in England (1839). The last-named Society was founded by William Adam, a friend and associate of Rammohun, in 1839. Its object was to create English public interest in Indian affairs and to work for "the improvement of the condition of the native population." Adam also edited a journal named the *British India Advocate*.

In 1842 Dwarkanath Tagore went to England and returned to India in 1843 with George Thompson. The latter was well-known as an orator and as a protagonist of the anti-slavery campaign and of free-trade in England. Thompson was brought to educate Bengali youths in methods of constitutional agitation. Thompson succeeded in creating great enthusiasm among the youngmen. On his suggestion was founded a new political association—the Bengal British India Society (20 April, 1843). The object of this Society was, "the collection and dissemination of information, relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, and the laws and institutions, and resources of the country, and to employ such other means of a peace-

able and lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects". The membership of the Society was open to all. But most of the members belonged to the upper classes of Indians and sympathetic Englishmen. The Society, however, met with little success and had not much appeal as a political organisation.

Contribution  
of Akshoy  
Kumar Datta

In the forties of the nineteenth century political thought in Bengal made remarkable progress owing to the rationalistic and powerful writings of Akshoy Kumar Datta and the all-round progressive and advanced outlook and tendencies promoted by the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*. Akshoy Kumar believed in the need for a representative character in Government and argued that no Government had an inherent right to tax the people unless it looked after their all-round improvement. It was the duty of the Government to give the people education and make them happy, healthy and prosperous. He criticised the British Indian administration and complained that under it the people had suffered in health, strength and religion. Dependence in any form was detested by him. Though not connected with any political association, Akshoy Kumar Datta made significant contribution to the growth of political consciousness among educated men.

The Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society failed to give the necessary lead in political issues. Consequently the pace of political advancement seemed to have slowed down considerably. The two Societies failed to create any interest among the people. Analysing the shortcomings of both the bodies Bholanath Chandra wrote that "one represented the aristocracy of wealth, the other aristocracy of intelligence". But when the political situation had become insipid one event brought in a dramatic change and stirred the whole country. This was the Black Acts controversy which started in 1849.

Origin of the  
Black Acts  
controversy

The 85th clause of the Charter Act of 1833 had directed the Government of India to make laws for the protection of Indians from insult and outrages at the hands of European British subjects i.e. white skinned British subjects of European origin living in India. The Government of India was advised that in order to keep the British-born subjects under effective control and supervision they should be brought under the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the East India Company's Courts in India. On the effort and initiative of Thomas Babington Macaulay, then Law Member of the Governor-General's Council, the Act XI of 1836 brought the British-born subjects under the civil jurisdiction of the Company's courts. The hue and cry raised by the European community and their angry remonstrances proved ineffective. A striking feature of the first Black Act controversy of 1836-1838 was the absence of Indian support and sympathy for the forthright and courageous attempt by Macaulay and his colleagues to establish legal equality and abolish the exclusive privileges enjoyed by the British-born subjects. One of the reasons behind the lack of Indian support for the Act XI of 1836 was that the politically conscious Indians still viewed influential members of the European community in Calcutta as their instructors who were teaching the Indians the art of political organisation and making them aware of their rights as subjects of the British empire. It took another decade before the Indians were disillusioned.

Black Acts  
controversy of  
1849-50

In 1849 Bethune, Law Member of the Government of India, introduced four Bills with the object of bringing British-born subjects under the criminal jurisdiction of the local courts, thus abolishing the existing privilege of trial by the Calcutta Supreme Court alone. The proposed Acts alarmed the British-born subjects and they started agitation against the "Black Acts"—as they called these just proposals. The politically-minded Indians strongly supported the Bills. Ramgopal Ghose earned the name 'Indian Demosthenes' for his fiery oratory in favour of the Bills. But the Bills

had to be withdrawn because of the determined opposition of the English community. This was a bitter disappointment for the Indians. The controversy exposed the limitations of the existing political organisations of the Indians. The need of a stronger and broader political body was felt. These developments led to the merger of the two existing Societies and the foundation of the British Indian Association on 31 October, 1851.

The Black Acts controversy of 1849-1850 ended the era of cohesion and co-operation between the Europeans and the natives. The membership of the British Indian Association was open only to Indians. Its object was to seek for improvements in the local administration and in the system of government laid down by the Parliament. The Association had an all-India outlook. In its first annual Report the Association noted with satisfaction "the formation at Poona, Madras and Bombay successively, of Associations of a similar character." The second annual Report stated that the Association "have kept up friendly correspondence with the Associations of the sister Presidencies, at intervals, as opportunities occurred." In 1852 the British Indian Association submitted a petition to the Government enumerating existing grievances and making a number of demands. Giving vent to the growing sense of disappointment, the petition said that Indians "cannot but feel that they have not profited by their connection with Great Britain to the extent which they had a right to look for." The demands of the Association included the allowing of a sufficient interval between the publication of draft Bills and their enactment. This, they argued, was necessary for eliciting public opinion. The petition prayed for reduction of postage for newspapers, relaxation of the pressure of the revenue system, improvement of judicial administration, protection of the life and property of the people from molestation, encouragement to indigenous manufacturers, education of the people and admission of Indians to higher administrative posts. One of the most



important demands of the Association was that the Legislature of India should have a popular character and some Indian members should be included in the Legislature. The Association laid great emphasis on this demand and asserted that "every legitimate means should be adopted to ensure the removal of this great defect from the new enactment, as well as to secure the advantage of having the business of legislation conducted with open doors."

The Company's Charter was to be renewed in 1853. The occasion for the presentation of the petition was the impending renewal of the charter. It was realised that legitimate grievances and demands of the people should be voiced and presented by people of various parts of British India. With this end in view a Madras Presidency branch of the Association was founded. This Association in Madras also sought to improve the efficiency of the administration and "ameliorate the condition of the native inhabitants of the subject country." An Association was also founded in Oudh.

In the Bombay Presidency the Kalyan Unanayak Mandal of Poona had been working for constitutional reforms. It had drawn up a charter of rights for presentation to the British Parliament. Gopal Hari Deshmukh, more well known as *Lokahitavadi*, was the most notable leader of the Mandal. He did much to propagate nationalistic ideas. In August, 1852, was founded the Bombay Association. The initiative was taken by Jagannath Shankar Sheth. The Bombay Association submitted a petition to the British Parliament praying for an "enlightened system of government."

The efforts of the British Indian Association and other Associations did not meet with any immediate success. In the subsequent years the British Indian Association suggested the holding of the Civil Service Examination in India. It also supported another attempt to bring British-born subjects under the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. This time also the move failed. The controversy on this

issue continued. In 1861 the privileges of the British-born subjects were abolished, though they still could not be tried by Indian officers. This disparity continued to cause much hatred and bitterness. The British Indian Association and its sister organisations in other parts of India proceeded on the lines of constitutional agitation. Though their efforts failed in achieving anything remarkable yet they contributed to a growing sense of political consciousness and interest in national affairs.

1857 : A                      When the Indian intelligentsia were trail-  
 Mutiny or                    ing the placid path of constitutional agitation,  
 War of                        there took place the historic Mutiny of 1857.  
 Independ-                    The nature of the great rising has been a sub-  
 ence ?                        ject of lively controversy. According to a number of  
    historians the Mutiny of 1857 was really India's "First  
    National War of Independence." It was the country's  
    "desperate bid for freedom.....the first expression,  
    indeed, howsoever crude in many respects, of India's urge  
    for independence." It was a "planned and organised  
    political and military rising aimed at destroying the British  
    power in India." But there are others who differ from this  
    view. They argue that the Mutiny was not an organised  
    conspiracy against the British. It was the work of the  
    Sepoys themselves. Only in some areas it assumed the  
    character of a general revolt. There was indeed wide-  
    spread discontent among the people of all classes. But  
    only a few among them might have been inspired by nobler  
    motives of patriotism. Others only saw in it an oppor-  
    tunity to satisfy their own interest by the sudden removal  
    of governing authority. It was essentially a mutiny of the  
    Sepoys, assuming the character of peoples' revolt in certain  
    areas only. The politically conscious educated classes con-  
    demned the Mutiny and the violence of the mutineers. The  
    British Indian Association and the National Mohammedan  
    Association of Calcutta passed resolutions denouncing the  
    Mutiny and expressing the hope that it would have "no  
    sympathy, countenance or support from the bulk of the  
    Civil population." The native population, by and large,  
 F—2

stood by the side of the Government. Even though it was a large-scale struggle against the British, it cannot be regarded as a "War of Independence" because "the idea of a common national endeavour to free the country from the yoke of the foreigners" was absent.

Besides the two above-mentioned completely opposite schools of opinion there is a third view on the Mutiny of 1857. According to this, the movement of 1857 had its origin in Sepoy discontent and derived its strength from the widespread disaffection among the civil population. It started as a Sepoy Mutiny but was not confined to the army everywhere. The rebels came from all sections of the people and enjoyed popular support in varying degrees in the main areas of the revolt. But the educated classes were undoubtedly on the side of the Government and condemned the violent outbreak. The movement achieved greatest success in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and Rohilkand. Outside Oudh and Shahabad it lacked general sympathy and cannot be said to have earned the status of a national war. Even in the case of Oudh, where it assumed a "national dimension", the term must be used with reservation as "the conception of Indian nationality was yet in embryo." If the mutineers could succeed the "leaders would have set the clock back, they would have done away with the new reforms, with the new order.....In short, they wanted a counter-revolution." But the Mutiny was inevitable. "No dependent nation can for ever reconcile itself to foreign domination." The condemnation of the educated Indians is understandable. They still had firm faith in British liberalism. Political agitations were continued on constitutional lines and any programme or thought of a violent attempt to overthrow British rule was beyond their comprehension. This view, very forcibly presented by Dr. Surendranath Sen, is generally regarded to be more balanced.

The far-reaching effects of the Mutiny on the growth of Indian nationalism were significant. Its memory inspired the Indian revolutionaries between the two

World Wars. After the Mutiny the Government of India was brought under the Crown. It opened the eyes of the British authorities and brought home to them the necessity of a change in policy and attitude. The Queen's Proclamation (1 November, 1858) promised to respect the rights, dignity and honour of the Indian princes. It pledged to pursue a policy of justice, benevolence and religious toleration. There would be no discrimination in matters of employment. The Proclamation was followed by the Indian Councils Act of 1861 which marked a constitutional advance. For the first time Indians were to be nominated to the newly-created Legislative Councils. Most of these remained mere pious declarations. But nevertheless the Mutiny was a landmark in the growth of Indian nationalism. It ushered in a period of constitutional advancement. Moreover, as Harish Chandra Mukherjee wrote : "The time has nearly come when all Indian questions must be solved by Indians. The mutinies have made patent to the English public what must be the effects of politics in which the Native is allowed no voice."

The Indigo Agitation Almost in the wake of the rising of 1857 took place the Indigo agitation which immensely helped the growth of nationalism in Bengal. The politically conscious Bengali intelligentsia which had showed little sympathy for the Mutiny stood by the side of the poor Indigo cultivators in their heroic struggle against the unbearable tyranny and exploitation of the Indigo planters. It provided an inspiring example of co-operation between the poor peasants and the educated class. Foremost among the Bengali intellectuals, who supported the Indigo agitation, were Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Sisir Kumar Ghose, Monomohan Ghose and Dinabandhu Mitra. Another great friend of the Indigo cultivators was Rev. Long. The editorials, articles and reports of the *Hindu Patriot* of Harish Chandra Mukherjee and Dinabandhu Mitra's famous drama *Neel Darpan* which depicted the miserable life of the cultivators and the inhuman tyranny of the planters, moved the entire

*Bengali middle-class. The movement succeeded in mitigating the worst evils of Indigo cultivation. On its significance Sisir Kumar Ghose wrote : "It was the indigo disturbance which first taught the natives the value of combination and political agitation."* This was certainly so as far as the middle-class and peasantry co-operation was concerned.

## CHAPTER II

### NASCENT NATIONALISM

In the post-Mutiny period political consciousness and the assertion of national sentiment developed wider and more emotional characteristics. The pioneer of nationalism in Bengal during these years was Rajnarayan Bose. Himself a conservative Brahmo, Rajnarayan extolled the glory and virtue of Indian history, culture and heritage. The current of Western culture and civilization was at that time practically sweeping most of the educated Bengalis off their feet. Rajnarayan and others devoted themselves to the cause of Hindu cultural heritage and turning the tide of Westernization. In 1866 was founded the Society for the Promotion of National Feeling (*Jatio Gaurab Sampadani Sabha*) at Midnapore in Bengal. A prospectus for a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal was issued by Rajnarayan Bose in the same year. The object of the Society was to revive the national gymnastic exercises, establish a Model School of Instruction in Hindi Music, set up a School of Hindu Medicine, publish in Bengali the results of the researches of the Sanskrit scholars of Europe on Indology etc.

Inspired by this prospectus of Rajnarayan <sup>Hindu</sup> Mela (1867) the *Hindu Mela* was established in 1867. The initiative was taken by Nabagopal Mitra who, for his zealous preaching of nationalistic ideas, became known as 'National Nabagopal'. The main object of the *Hindu Mela* was to foster the spirit of self-help which was considered essential to national progress and welfare. The *Mela* worked for the

development of national literature, national songs, national gymnastics, physical culture. exhibition of various products of Indian arts and crafts and promotion of Indian products. The *Hindu Mela* sought to help the growth of Indian economy. Its annual sessions continued upto 1880 and were attended by thousands of people and created great public enthusiasm. As the *Mela* was only an annual fair the need for a permanent body to popularise the objects of the *Mela* throughout the year was keenly felt. To minister to this need the National Society (*Jatio Sabha*) was founded.

The Hindu emphasis      The nationalism fostered by the *Hindu Mela*, as the very name suggested, had a predominantly Hindu emphasis. To the founders and organisers of the *Mela* nationalism meant unity and the basis of national unity in India, they believed, had been the Hindu religion. The growth of this Hindu tone was inevitable though a broader basis was much more desirable. The Hindu bias of Indian nationalism of this period may also be attributed to the lack of Muslim national consciousness. The Muslims, in general, were not yet taking part in the growth of Indian nationalism. There were very few nationalistic Muslims. It was not until 1874, when Sir Syed Ahmad stepped in, that the Muslim awakening took place.

The *Hindu Mela*, in spite of its Hindu emphasis, had an all-India outlook. It fostered the spirit of self-help among the people. This went a long way in building up Indian nationalism. It was a source of inspiration to many nationalists. As Rabindranath Tagore, who still in his teens was closely associated with it along with many other members of his family, observed : "It was not fully political, but it began to give voice to the mind of our people trying to assert their own personality." On this phase of nationalism Tagore wrote : "The national movement was started to proclaim that we must not be indiscriminate in our rejection of the past. This was not a reactionary movement but a revolutionary one, because it set out with

a great courage to deny and to oppose all pride in mere borrowings."

Sisir Kumar Ghose In the seventies the national movement showed signs of becoming more broad-based and wider in outlook. This change owed much to the rapidly increasing number of newspapers and journals. The approach to national problems became more rational and assertive. Sisir Kumar Ghose, the founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, was one of the pioneers in bringing about this change. He was one of the early exponents of the extremist school of Indian politicians. He made the nationalists aware of the dangers of Muslim demand for special privileges. As early as in 1870 he voiced the demand for a Parliament for India. He was one of the founders of the Indian League. This association was started in 1875 to organise political agitations in India. The Indian League had a very brief existence. But it indicated the growing desire for an all-India political organisation.

Political organisations in Bombay and Poona The Bombay Association, which was not very active for some years, was revived by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1870. But its renewed activities lasted for only two years. A few years earlier Naoroji had started in England the East Indian Association. A branch of this Association was founded in Bombay in 1871, which did much to develop political ideas. The development of political ideas and organisations in western India was indebted to the efforts of K. T. Telang, Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabjee. The reformist activities of M. G. Ranade also contributed to the general enlightenment of the people. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, founded in 1867, was another important political association. It sought to give expression to the wants and wishes of the people of the Deccan. One of its principal organisers was G. K. Gokhale, a disciple of Ranade. Among other notable leaders of the Sabha were Ganesh Vasudev Joshi and Gopal Narsingh Deshpande. Political propaganda in favour of introduction of reforms in India was also carried out in England. Besides the East Indian Associa-



tion mentioned above, the National Indian Association (1867) and the Indian Society (1872) were founded in London. These organisations, with the sympathy and support of liberal-minded Englishmen, did useful work for the cause of reforms in India.

A landmark in the growth of nationalism in India was the foundation of the Indian Association in 1876. One of its illustrious founders was Surendranath Banerjee, who a few years earlier had been discharged from the Civil Service on trivial grounds. He went to England in 1875 to appeal to the India Office which proved fruitless. He found the doors to the Bar closed and returned to India as a disillusioned, dejected and angry youngman. In his famous book *A Nation in Making* Surendranath writes : "The personal wrong done to me was an illustration of the helpless impotency of our people. In the midst of impending ruin and dark frowning misfortune, I formed the determination of addressing myself to the task of helping our helpless people in this direction of redressing our wrongs and protecting our rights, both as individuals and as a nation." On his return from England he plunged himself into the activities of the Students' Association with the object of creating among the students "a genuine sober and rational interest in public affairs." As the need for an all-India political body had become more pressing Surendranath and his co-workers founded the Indian Association.

The main objects of the Indian Association were :

- (1) The creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country
- (2) The unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations.
- (3) The promotion of friendly feeling between the Hindus and the Muslims
- (4) The inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day.

In his inaugural address Surendranath said that there was no political organisation in Bengal that represented the middle-class and the ryots. He stressed that the Indian Association would take in hand "the education of the masses" and would give the middle-class youngmen a political life of their own "on a more democratic basis." The leaders of the new political body were mostly young well-educated Indians many of whom were lawyers and journalists. Dr. Anil Seal has described the Indian Association as "a pressure group for graduates and professional men, which claimed to represent the 'middle class'."

**Activities of the Indian Association** The Indian Association sought to work in co-operation with the political organisations in other provinces. It started a campaign in 1877 against the reduction of the maximum limit of age from 21 to 19 for the open competitive Examination for the Indian Civil Service.. The underlying object of the movement was "the awakening of a spirit of unity and solidarity among the people of India." To mobilise nationalists all over India, Surendranath toured different provinces in 1877-78 as a Special Delegate. The extensive lecture tour of Surendranath proved a great success and helped to strengthen nascent Indian nationalism. An all-India Memorial on the Civil Service question was addressed to the House of Commons. Lalmohan Ghose, a reputed barrister, was sent to London to represent the Indian Association. The Association also received the help of John Bright who took up its cause in England. The efforts of the Association were not altogether in vain.

The Indian Association also took great interest in the development of local self-government. It urged on the people to join the Association in petitioning for an elective system in the municipalities. In the following years the Association demanded elected district boards and municipalities. The programme of the Indian Association also included peasant right. Its subscription was reduced to attract ryots, village headmen and cultivators. The Association expressed its concern for "the vast agricultural

community of Bengal" who constituted "the basis and foundation of the whole social fabric." The Association welcomed the introduction of the Rent Bill and organised meetings of ryots. The enthusiastic support for the peasants displeased the zamindars. It also caused a wider rift between the Indian Association and the British Indian Association. The latter body lost its popularity and influence.

The Indian Association continued to take an active interest in all the political issues of the period and led different agitations. Close on the heels of the Civil Service agitation were started agitations against the repressive Arms Act (1878), and the Vernacular Press Act (1878) of the reactionary Viceroy Lord Lytton. The Arms Act sought to limit the possession of arms and the second Act imposed crippling restrictions on the vernacular press. The diversion of the Famine Fund to the Afghan War added to the widespread discontent of the people. The reactionary Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton was a blessing in disguise for the growth of Indian nationalism. Slowly the more advanced among the nationalist Indians began to feel that mere agitations against objectionable Acts and Government policies would not be enough. The real solution lay in bringing the administration under the control of the Indians themselves.

Ilbert Bill  
agitation and  
the Contempt  
Case of  
Surendranath  
(1883)

The next Viceroy Lord Ripon was a true Liberal. He repealed the gagging Press Act, introduced the Local Self-Government Act, appointed the Hunter Commission to review the progress of education and suggest ways for its improvement, introduced the Factory Act for the welfare of the workers and envisaged a Tenancy Bill. While Ripon's liberal administration was raising new hopes in the minds of the nationalists, the rude shocks of the Ilbert Bill controversy and the Contempt Case of Surendranath gave a new impetus to the national movement and made it more dynamic and widespread than ever before.

In 1883, Ilbert, the Law Member of the Viceroy's

Council, introduced a Bill which sought to abolish the privileges enjoyed by the British-born subjects and bring them under the jurisdiction of Indian Magistrates. This was actually the climax of the drama that had started since the Black Acts controversy of 1849. As in the past, it raised hue and cry in the European community, and led by Branson, a Barrister, they started a campaign against the Bill with all their might. Indian public opinion, which by now was quite formidable, organised a counter-campaign. But ultimately even Ripon could not have it his own way, and had to concede to pressure from home and abroad, and the proposed Bill was modified.

This was a humiliating defeat for the Indian nationalists. As Coupland writes, "such demonstrations of a claim to racial superiority became more intolerable as nationalism strengthened its hold on Indian minds. For the principle of equal status for all nations, great and small, is the cardinal doctrine of nationalism in revolt." The obvious need of a much broader and stronger political body was keenly felt by all.

Along with the Ilbert Bill agitation the Contempt Case of Surendranath Banerjee (May, 1883) caused unprecedented public agitation. Surendranath was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for contempt of court in a passage published in his paper *Bengalee*. Surendranath took serious exception to certain derogatory action of Justice Norris of the Calcutta High Court and non-chalantly remarked in the *Bengalee* (2 April, 1883) that such a person was unfit to be a Judge of the High Court. The sentence of imprisonment on Surendranath touched off a spontaneous public agitation, the tempo<sup>re</sup> of which had been mounting for some time.

All-India  
National  
Conference  
(1883)

The upheaval of 1883 taught the Indian nationalists the value of a greater and wider political movement. To give concrete shape to the idea of a broader political organisation the Indian Association called an All-India National Conference in Calcutta. It was preceded by the starting of a

National Fund to furnish the sinews of a political struggle. The first All-India National Conference, presided by Ramtanu Lahiri, was attended by representatives from different provinces. The Conference discussed and passed resolutions on technical education, the covenanted Civil Service, the Arms Act, representative Government, etc. Surendranath undertook another tour of upper India in 1884 to establish closer contact with Indian nationalists and strengthen the spirit of unity. The rapid growth of political organisations was also evident in the foundation of the Bombay Presidency Association (1885) and the Mahajan Sabha of Madras (1884). The second All-India National Conference was also held in Calcutta in December, 1885. This coincided with the first session of the Indian National Congress which was being held in Bombay.

With the foundation of the Congress, the Indian Association practically ceased to be a national political body and it henceforward limited itself mainly to welfare activities in the province of Bengal. National issues were left for deliberations in the Congress.

### BEGINNING OF THE CONGRESS ERA

Ground prepared for the Congress
 The year 1885, in which the first historic meeting of the Indian National Congress took place, is erroneously regarded by many as marking the birth of Indian nationalism. The origin of the Indian national movement, as discussed above, is to be traced to much earlier developments of great significance. Years of sincere efforts and organised campaigns by various men and organisations had prepared the ground for an all-India organisation. The first National Conference that met in Calcutta in 1883 was a decisive step forward in that direction. The second National Conference of 1885 was convened jointly by the British Indian Association, the Indian Association and the National Mohammedan Association. It was attended by representatives from various parts of India. The resolutions passed in the first Congress were very similar to those of the first National Conference (1883). But the members of the National Conference did not desire to set up another national organisation though they were pioneers in the field. They saw that the Congress had greater possibility of becoming a truly national organisation and they joined it in 1866. They heartily co-operated and devoted themselves to making the Congress a great success. They decided in favour of fusion as they thought that the National Conference "had no necessity for separate existence except to the detriment of the other, or possibly of both." This was a remarkable testimony to their wide out-

look and wisdom.

Origin of the Congress      There are several views about the origin of the idea of the Indian National Congress. One of these is that the idea originated from the Delhi *Durbar* of 1877. But according to Surendranath Banerjee it was the All-India National Conference of 1883 which "anticipated the Congress by two years and in a large measure prepared the ground for the Congress." Some of the organisers of the first National Congress had obtained notes on the first National Conference and the latter is believed to have provided an example and an inspiration for similar move in Bombay.

The *Hindu* wrote on January 18, 1883 that it had information that the Indian Association of Calcutta was "maturing a scheme for an annual *national Congress* to be held in some central city such as Delhi to which native gentlemen from different parts of the country were to be invited." The paper warmly welcomed the idea. There are several other suggestions regarding the origin of the Congress. According to G. Subramania Iyer, one of the members of the first Congress, the origin of the Congress should be traced to the International Exhibition held in Calcutta in 1883. The idea of the Congress has also been attributed to the farewell of Lord Ripon in December, 1884. It is argued that the occasion provided an opportunity for a meeting and consultation of leading Indians from different parts of the country and for the first time "the idea of a common gathering of patriotic men from all parts of India" took a practical shape. According to Mrs. Annie Besant, the idea of the Congress was conceived in a private meeting of some members of the Theosophical Convention held at Madras in December, 1884. Reference should also be made to the suggestion of Tarapada Banerjee, a young Bengali lawyer of Krishnagar, for the foundation of a National Assembly to agitate for the introduction of representative institutions in India. He wrote in the *Indian Mirror* (July 4, 1883) that a public meeting

ought to be convened in Calcutta, asking gentlemen from different parts of India to be present, for implementing the idea.

Efforts of  
Allan Octavian Hume  
The credit of organising the first National Congress belongs to Allan Octavian Hume.

He was a retired Civil Servant with liberal ideas and was keen on Indian progress. An Irish member of the House of Commons, O'Donnell, published a letter, reproduced in the *Bombay Native Opinion* (4 February, 1883), suggesting the establishment of a national association. Many newspapers in India published the letter and welcomed O'Donnell's proposal. Shortly after, Hume addressed an open letter to the graduates of the University of Calcutta, urging them to devote themselves earnestly and unselfishly to the cause of the progress of the country and to securing greater freedom for the Indians. He formed in 1884 the Indian National Union with branches in the big cities. Its objects were to promote unified Indian nationalism, to infuse a new life in various spheres of life in India and help establish a closer relation between India and England by securing the removal of unjust and harmful laws. Hume desired to convene a national conference of the representatives of various branches and areas at the end of the year. But his scheme did not materialise before 1885.

Hume's  
apprehensions  
In 1885 Hume met the Viceroy Lord Dufferin and placed before him a proposal that every year leading Indians should meet and discuss social matters and establish close contact among themselves. The consideration that prompted Hume to set up an organisation like the Congress was the dreadful possibility of a widespread outbreak of violence in India. William Wedderburn, the autobiographer of Hume, writes that the "State of things at the end of Lord Lytton's reign was bordering upon a revolution." Commenting on the reactionary measures of Lord Lytton, Wedderburn writes : "These ill-starred measures of reaction, combined with Russian methods of police repression, brought India under



Lord Lytton within measurable distance of a revolutionary outbreak, and it was only in time that Mr. Hume and his Indian advisers were inspired to intervene." Hume, it is said, after going through a mass of reports and recorded evidence shown to him apprehended a "terrible revolution." In a memorandum Hume wrote : "Many of the entries reported conversations between men of the lowest classes, all going to show that these poor men were pervaded with a sense of hopelessness of the existing state of affairs, that they were convinced that they would starve and die, and that they wanted to do *something*. They were going to do something, and stand by each other, *and that something meant violence*." Hume thought of some positive action to counteract the growing unrest. The idea of the Congress appeared to him as an effective device to ward off any such danger of violence. In Hume's own words, "A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own action, was urgently needed, and no more efficacious safety-valve than our Congress movement could possibly be devised." It was also to serve as a body for canalising the leading and progressive Indian public opinion along constitutional lines.

Dufferin showed great interest in Hume's plan. The Viceroy told Hume that one of his great difficulties was the ascertaining of the real wishes of the people. He welcomed the plan of an organisation through which the Government might be kept informed of the Indian public opinion.

Birth of the Congress (1885)      Dufferin suggested that the proposed body should also discuss political questions. He expected the body to perform "the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England." Hume accepted the suggestions of the Viceroy and discussed his plan with many leading Indians who also supported it. Hume then proceeded to give effect to his scheme and the first Indian National Congress met in Bombay during the Christmas week of 1885 under the Presidency of W. C. Bonnerjea, an eminent Bengali lawyer.

Thus the scheme of the Congress as a political body came from Lord Dufferin who "had made it a condition with Mr. Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country, and this condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr. Hume knew anything about the matter." But it was Hume who took all the trouble and made necessary contacts and arrangements for giving shape to the scheme.

The first Congress was attended by 72 invitees from different parts of India. In sponsoring the Congress, Hume had expressed the hope that it would help to bring together all who were devoted to the national cause and "the conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will in a few years constitute an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is unfit for any form of representative institution."

Objects of the Congress      The objects of the Congress were stated by the President, W. C. Bonnerjea. These were :

- (1) Promotion of personal intimacy of and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in the country's cause.
- (2) Eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices in order to develop and consolidate the sentiments of national unity.
- (3) To record and discuss the representative and matured opinions of the educated classes in India on important and pressing social problems.
- (4) To formulate the lines and methods of action to be pursued by the Indian politicians for public interests during the next twelve months.

Nature and significance of the first Congress      The first Congress passed a number of resolutions demanding certain reforms in the administration. All the speakers expressed their loyalty to the British Crown. The first Congress has been described as "a kind of middle-class

*darbar.*" One speaker referred to the establishment of the British rule in India as 'a merciful dispensation of Providence.' The President, speaking on the importance of this occasion, said, "such a thing is possible under British rule, and under British rule only." It has been aptly remarked by Dr. Spear that the members of the first Congress were "almost more concerned with insisting on their loyalty and the blessings of British rule than calling for progress and reforms" But with all its limitations "a start had been made" and out of it "the political giant of the twentieth century grew"

Second session of the Congress (1886)      The second session of the Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886. It was composed of delegates elected in public meetings held for the purpose in different provinces. A broader and wider outlook was clearly evident. Dadabhai Naoroji in his Presidential address asserted that the Congress should work as a political organisation, with a political platform, and discuss only those matters which affected the whole country. Rajendra-lal Mitra in his address said that the people were living under "a foreign bureaucracy." Even though there was the usual expression of loyalty to the British Government the unmistakable tone of criticism and the spirit of discontent were evident. The third session held in Madras was presided over by Badruddin Tyabji. This Congress also evoked great enthusiasm and revealed the growing public interest in the Congress.

Growing Popularity of the Congress      The changing character of the Congress and the marked tone of criticism evinced in the Calcutta Session perturbed Lord Dufferin and other Government officials. Apparently, the Congress was not emerging as "Her Majesty's Opposition in India" or as "a safety-valve." The Viceroy gave vent to his annoyance by snubbing the Congress as taking a "big jump into the unknown" and slighting the Congressmen as "microscopic minority." The Government attitude of patronage began to turn into one of positive dislike. But

the Congress began to gather in strength and popularity and there was increasing participation in the Congress sessions and Congress activities.

The Congress in its sessions continued to criticise the Government policy, and pass resolutions demanding reforms. But their loyalty to the Crown was always expressed and faith in English liberalism and sense of justice was reaffirmed. But there was hardly any British Government response to the Congress demands. The Congress sought to organise public opinion both in India and in England. It established a paid agency in London in 1888 which arranged lectures in England and distributed pamphlets to popularise the Congress viewpoint among the English public. The efforts did not prove abortive. The British Government response came in the form of the Indian Councils Act of 1892.

The Congress had been demanding the introduction of the elective system and reform of the Legislative Councils, both central and local. The Act of 1892 did not directly concede the demand of the Congress but it authorised the Viceroy "to invite representative bodies" in India to elect or select or delegate representatives of themselves and their opinions to be nominated to those Houses." The Supreme and the Provincial Councils were expanded and the members were given the right to discuss the Budget and ask questions on matters of public interest. The constitutional reforms introduced by the new Act fell far short of the Congress demands and expectations. But the provisions of the Act marked considerable constitutional advancement in India. Some scholars believed that the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was a triumph of the Indian National Congress and it was an outcome of the political agitation carried on by that body. The Act also prepared the ground for further reforms that followed in the next few years.

Growth of  
Extremism

"It is the natural fate of all nationalist movements to split sooner or later into moderate and extremist sections—the one believing in patience, in

“gradualness”, in progress by means of lawful agitation and constitutional reforms, the other rejecting such methods as unavailing and unending.” The Congress proved no exception to the above pattern of developments. In spite of its rapid transformation into a truly all-India organisation, and of its growing popularity, a rift in the Congress ranks became evident. The Congress expression of loyalty to the Crown in all the sessions and its “policy of prayer and petition” dissatisfied the more advanced section of the nationalists. A leaning towards the adoption of a more radical policy became discernible.

**Ideological Background** The extremist philosophy owed its development to a number of important factors. The teachings of Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Swami Vivekananda prepared the soil for the growth of radical ideas though none of them had taken any part in politics. As Dr. Anand Tripathi has pointed out, the “Extremist challenge” is to be analysed in the context of the “ideological environment” which was created by the preachings of Bankimchandra, Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswati. Bankim had shown the way by his criticism of the moderates. He was the forerunner of the young radicals in politics who had only contempt for the policy of prayer and petition. Aurobindo had learnt from Bankim that “the future lies not with the Indian Un-national Congress or the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj”. Bankim had composed the hymn *Bandemataram* which instilled among the youngmen—a true and deep love for the motherland. His *Anandamath* profoundly moved the generation of Aurobindo. The *Anandamath* provided an example and served as an inspiration for selfless, fearless struggle for the freedom of the motherland from tyranny and oppression. Bankim also translated into Bengali the *Bhagavad Gita*, with extensive commentaries, which urged men to look upon his body as a mere transient thing, to perform his duty with detached spirit without caring for result or reward, and to carry on his job assigned by God without remorse or repent as he was merely doing His work.

Swami Vivekananda also often referred to the *Bhagavad Gita* as containing the highest ideal and stating the supreme objectives of mankind. The soul stirring messages of Vivekananda put the image of the motherland on a high pedestal and he was indeed "the Michelangelo of the realm of spirit.."

Political  
Background

Besides the influence of the ideology of Bankim, Vivekananda and Dayananda and others the political background of extremism was created by several other issues. The moderates were political reformers who had high opinion about and faith in the British people. But they failed in their efforts to secure any worthwhile reform. The Indian Councils Act (1892) fell far short of even their expectations. The moderates' policy did not succeed in introducing the elective system in India and it had also failed to secure simultaneous Civil Service examinations. Their other demands had also yielded very little result. Consequently, the "second generation of Congressmen" questioned the moderate leadership as well as its assumptions.

Economic  
background

There were economic factors as well. The Tariff and Cotton Duties Acts of 1894 and 1896 contributed to the growth of extremist ideas. These Acts, blatantly formulated at the bidding of the Manchester manufacturers, were a severe blow to the Indian textile mills. Indian nationalists such as Aurobindo, Gokhale, Surendranath and Tilak bitterly criticised these legislations and in the process laid emphasis on self-help and self-reliance. Dadabhai Naoroji collected and published evidence to expose the existence of acute *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* and Rameshchandra Dutt in his monumental *Economic History of India* revealed the story of British commercial and financial exploitations of India. Aurobindo wrote that R. C. Dutt's work helped prepare the public mind for the boycott movement and Rameshchandra "not only wrote history but created it".

Other  
factors

By the end of the nineteenth century when extremist ideas were already catching the

imagination of the young Indian patriots, the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon precipitated the extremist challenge. He had no understanding of the Indian people and he viewed himself as the symbol of England's imperial mission "to rule the lesser breeds without the law." Curzon started with a very poor opinion about Indian intelligentsia and was hostile to the Congress. His moves to restrict and reduce the powers of local self-government and the attempt to establish rigid control over the educational institutions offended the people. The Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act (1904) was a threat to the Indian Press and it was considered worse than the Act of 1878. The Act of 1904 helped push an effective machinery of propaganda "into the willing hands of the Extremists." Japan's victory over Russia and the Russian Revolution of 1905 threatening the Tsarist regime were added incentives to the rapid popularity of extremism. The Partition of Bengal and the following Swadeshi movement made the wider dissemination and success of extremism inevitable.

Aurobindo  
Lajpat Rai  
and Tilak

The nineties of the last century were the "seed time" of extremism. It was Aurobindo Ghose who raised the voice of protest against the Congress policy. He had just returned from England and had joined the State Service of Baroda. He wrote a series of articles entitled "New Lamps for Old" in the *Induproakash*. He frankly stated that the Congress was unable to criticise the British rule fearlessly and it was failing to give the nation necessary leadership. It did not really represent the masses and had not attempted to become a popular body. He said, "A body like the Congress which represents not the mass of the population, but a single and very limited class, could not honestly be called national." He emphasised the need of "Purification by Blood and Fire" and pleaded that the Congress movement must arouse the masses.

Aurobindo's sharp and straightforward criticism caused the Congress leaders much concern and annoyance. But in the Punjab, the radical trend found great response. Lala

Lajpat Rai, the "Lion of Punjab", in a remarkable review pointed out the main weakness of the Congress and showed that it had yet failed to initiate a truly national mass movement.

The chief exponent of the extremist idea, as it was called, was Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra. He pleaded that on the ancient heritage was to be built up the Indian future, and that the policy of mendicancy must give way to one of assertion of Indian rights. Political agitation must spread among the masses, a spirit of self-help must be developed, and *Swaraj* or self-government must be the goal of the national movement. "Home rule is my birth right and I will have it" was the slogan that he raised, which gave a new colour to the movement. He organised the *Ganapati* and *Shivaji* festivals to awaken mass consciousness. Shivaji, to Tilak and other extremists, was not merely the symbol of a political revolution. He was, writes Bipin-chandra Pal, "the symbol of a grand idea, the memory of a noble sentiment, the mouthpiece of a great movement." Patriotic Indians began to look for heroes in the pages of history. The Punjabis extolled Ranjit Singh. In Bengal the courage and determination of the *Bar Bhuiyas* (Twelve Landlords) were recalled, especially Pratapaditya's struggle against the mighty Mughals. The memory of Sitaram and Sirajudoulla was revived. Indeed, "hero-worship swept India" during the closing years of the nineteenth and the early years of the present century. Thus 'history' was used to support the extremist thesis.

Tilak continued to publish his fire-brand articles. In one of these Tilak analysed the causes of deterioration in India and wrote : "We are becoming so weak or lifeless that anybody may lord it over us or tyrannize over us all." In another article, referring to Congress prayers and petitions, he wrote : "Our shouting has no more affected the Government than the sound of a gnat..... Let us now try to force our grievances into their ears by strong constitutional means." He stressed the need of giving political education to the villagers and bring them within the fold



of the Congress. "Then only", Tilak wrote, "will the Government realise that to despise the Congress is to despise the Indian nation. Then only will the efforts of the Congress leaders be crowned with success." Tilak was imprisoned for alleged seditious speeches in 1897 which had great repercussions on the whole country.

The Congress was now practically divided into two schools of thought—the Moderates and the Extremists. The old Congress leadership including G. K. Gokhale, Surendranath, Pherozeshah Mehta, Sankaran Nair and others belonged to the former group. Gokhale with his firm faith in the principle of co-operation, gradual reform and gentle persuasion was a true representative of the Moderate group. He later founded the Servants of India Society (1905) which worked to foster nationalism in a religious spirit among the people. The Extremists thrived in the Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal. Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal became famous as Lal-Bal-Pal. Their main contention was that "good government is no substitute for self-government."

The advanced political ideas and burning patriotism of the Bengali nationalists provided an excellent breeding ground for extremist trends. As early as in 1887, Aswinikumar Datta of Barisal presented a mass petition for representative Government. In 1897 he criticised the Congress session as three days' *tamasha* (fun-fair or farce). The Bengali nationalists were also dissatisfied, as the Congress, on the plea of being an all-India organisation, refused to discuss such vital issues as the miserable condition and suffering of the labourers employed in the Assam tea-gardens. To discuss such local but important political issues was founded the Bengal Provincial Conference in 1887. Similar organisations were soon set up in other provinces. The Provincial Conferences immensely contributed to the growth of political consciousness and patriotism among the rural people.

The New  
Spirit

Another significant feature of the national movement of the period, particularly in Bengal, was the growth of what is known as the New Spirit. This was in continuation of the tradition of the *Hindu Mela*. The Industrial Exhibition of 1896 further helped to develop this happy trend. The Chinese boycott of foreign goods, the Boer War, the Japanese awakening and other progressive international movements gave impetus to the efforts to build up Indian economy. In Bengal Swadeshi Stores were opened and campaign for Swadeshi goods was started. Sarala Devi, Satischandra Mukherjee, Jogeshchandra Choudhury, Balendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore and others opened a *Swadeshi Bhandar* to popularise indigenous products. Emphasis was laid on physical culture and political education of the people. The new spirit of nationalism found refulgent reflection in contemporary literature.

Reactionary  
measures of  
Lord  
Curzon

By the end of the 19th Century nationalism had reached a new stage in Bengal. The movement in general also was assuming a shape and character which caused the British Government much concern. The increasing revolutionary tendencies in the Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal added to their discomfort and apprehension. It was at this critical period that Lord Curzon arrived in India (1898) as the new Viceroy. He was totally out of sympathy with the Indian aspiration and had scant respect for the Congress. In 1900 he wrote : "In my belief Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise." He took recourse to an autocratic and repressive policy to curb the growing trend of dynamic nationalism. The Municipality Act (1899) imposed restrictions on the power of the elected Commissioners of the Calcutta Municipality. It was followed by the Indian Universities Act (1904) which sought to cripple the growth of nationalistic trends by bringing the Universities under greater Government control. The Indian nationalists were in no mood to bow before such reactionary measures. A

country-wide agitation against the Act of 1904 was started. The *Dawn Society*, founded in 1902, roused patriotic feelings among the youths. Papers like *Dawn* and *New India* helped to spread extremist ideas in Bengal.

The scheme of the partition of Bengal      Lord Curzon, now bent on crushing the Congress and with it the Indian national aspirations, played his trump card. His first plan of operation was to crush the nationalist solidarity in Bengal. For some time a partition of Bengal on grounds of administrative necessity was being considered. To this was now added the prospect of exploiting the separatist feelings of the Muslims. This would be a lethal blow to the nationalist cause. Prompted by these considerations Lord Curzon proceeded to give effect to his plan of partition of Bengal. It was decided to separate the divisions of Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi from the Province. These were to be joined to Assam, and a new Province called East Bengal and Assam was to be formed with Dacca as its capital.

## CHAPTER IV

### SWADESHI AND SWARAJ

#### *The Swadeshi Movement :*

**Partition of Bengal (1905)**      The partition of Bengal was a sore challenge to the Bengali nationalists and it unleashed a broad, popular movement, unprecedented in spontaneity and far-reaching in consequence. The rumour of the proposed plan of Partition had been widespread for some time past. The decision of partition was announced on 20 July, 1905, to be effective on and from 16 October, 1905. The plan was opposed by all sections of people and the reaction in newspapers was very hostile. Numerous public meetings were organised opposing partition and hundreds of petitions were sent to local authorities, Bengal Government, Government of India and to the Secretary of State. Signature campaign was carried on at *melas* and religious festivals.

**Hostile public reaction**      In its initial stage the plan of campaign did not include either boycott or Swadeshi. The emphasis was on building up an unassailable case against the Government decision which appeared palpably unjust and unwise. But in spite of all efforts the partition came as a rude shock and eye-opener to patriotic Bengalis or indeed, Indians. It exposed the limitations of the policy of prayer and petition on which Bipinchandra Pal wrote, "If anything could prove the utter futility of our so-called methods of constitutional political agitation, the history of the agitation against the proposal to partition

Bengal has done it."

The beginning of the Swadeshi Movement      The announcement of July 1905, set off a mighty upsurge. It provided "elements of unity" and inspired one and all in one way or another, for some time at least, to support economic Swadeshi and national education to foster the spirit of self-reliance. Krishnakumar Mitra in his *Sanjibani* gave the clarion call and urged his countrymen to boycott foreign goods and to take a solemn vow to use *Swadeshi* goods only. These patriotic proposals found warm and ready response and Rabindranath reaffirmed the peoples' unity and unflinching determination in the *Bangadarshan*. Numerous protest meetings were held including a huge one held in the Calcutta Town Hall on 7 August, 1905, indicating the depth and trend of public opinion in Bengal.

The student community joined the anti-partition movement with great enthusiasm. '*Bande Mataram*' was taken up as the soul-stirring slogan. Students' patriotism knew no bounds. Surendranath writes : "It was the fervour of the students that communicated itself to the whole community and inspired it with an impulse the like of which had never been felt before." The 'Boycott' and 'Swadeshi' ideas were fostered and popularised by the vernacular newspapers and journals. This new spirit of resurgent patriotism found reflection in contemporary literature. The soulful songs and poems of Rabindranath instilled into the people a burning patriotic zeal and a sense of idealism. The plays and songs of Dwijendralal Roy, Rajanikanta Sen and others also helped increase the ardent emotional faith in the country's freedom.

A considerable section of the Muslim community led by men like Abdul Rasul, Guznavi and Liaquat Hussain pledged their support to the *Swadeshi* ideas. The movement also began to find a large measure of sympathy and support outside Bengal.

In Bengal the *Swadeshi* and *Boycott* ideas evoked response from all sections and classes of people. Popular

enthusiasm was indeed unprecedented. Organisations like the *Brati Samiti*, *Bande Mataram*, *Sanatan Sampradaya* etc., were formed to promote and propagate Swadeshi ideas. Older organisations, e.g., the *Dawn Society* had already been very active in popularising the new nationalist spirit.

The date of Partition, 16 October, 1905, was observed, on the suggestion of Rabindranath, as the *Rakhi Bandhan* Day. The observance signified "the indissoluble brotherhood between East Bengal men and West Bengal men, between rich and low, between Christians, Mohamedans and Hindus born of the soil." "The *Rakhi* ceremony", Rabindranath wrote, "will indicate that no monarch's sword, however powerful, can cut asunder the bond of union implanted by Providence amongst people forming one and the same race." On that day people refrained from cooking. Shops and markets remained closed, vehicular traffic ceased and life came to a standstill. Processions were taken out and people tied *Rakhi* on each other's wrists. A mammoth public meeting was held in the evening. Ananda Mohan Bose presided over the meeting and laid the foundation of the Federation Hall. This building was to be "the mark and symbol of their indivisible union." After the meeting a huge procession was taken out to the north of the city and there another meeting was held where a large sum of money was raised for the successful operation of the Swadeshi movement which was unique in the history of Indian nationalism. Started with an intense emotional resistance against an alien government's unwise, offensive administrative measure, the movement soon transcended its rather limited and immediate objective. It was soon transformed into a mighty upsurge with singular effects on the course of the Indian national struggle

Boycott and Swadeshi programmes were interlinked. The success of the former depended on the success of efforts in building

up home industries. As aptly remarked by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "The Boycott was the negative, the Swadeshi the positive, aspect of the same idea." Boycott had two-fold implications. Materially, it was to be used as a pressure on Manchester which would react on the Government of India. Spiritually, Boycott was hoped to dispel *Maja* or illusion of British power and it would be a needed sacrifice for *Swaraj*. Tilak described Swadeshi movement as "the *yoga* of *bahiskar*", a religious ritual of self-punishment. To Surendranath it was in spirit "a protectionist movement", which was expected to usher in "a new era of material prosperity" for the masses. Both Tilak and Lajpat Rai viewed the movement as a training in self-help, determination and sacrifice. It was a powerful instrument of "political agitation". The ideas of Boycott and Swadeshi were not new. Their origin could be traced to as early as 1848 when Gopalrao Deshmukh of Poona advocated it. Later it became a major theme of the *Hindu Mela*. The Extremists only "enlarged upon these ideas quantitatively as well as qualitatively." The two ideas became instruments of national agitation and effectively conveyed the new spirit of self-help. Textile mills, national banks, hosiery, tobacco and soap factories, tanneries, chemical works, insurance companies, etc., were set up to emphasise the positive aspect of the Swadeshi programme. Swadeshi stores were opened. The Swadeshi spirit inspired J. N. Tata who founded the Tata Iron and Steel. The same spirit also helped the survival of cottage industries of Bengal. Swayed by patriotism people preferred coarser and dearer Swadeshi goods to finer and cheaper foreign ones. Groups of volunteers worked untiringly to supply the goods from door to door. Surendranath Banerjee, Bipinchandra Pal, Aswini Kumar Datta, Aurobindo Ghose and others sought to make the movement as broad-based as possible. Various *Samitis*, newspapers and journals popularised the movement. Public meetings and processions, picketting, patriotic songs, bonfire of foreign goods and fiery speeches kept the spirit of nationalism living and

burning at white heat.

**Government repression** The Swadeshi movement was now assuming the unmistakable character of a national struggle for freedom. "The question was no longer the boycott of British goods but of British rule." The Government sought to crush the movement by repressive measures. As the movement owed much of its success and popularity to the students' participation, the Government sent circulars to the educational institutions asking the authorities to take stern action against the recalcitrant student-agitators. The Government circulars, provocative as they were, raised a storm of protest. Out of this critical bitterness was born the idea of National Education, i.e., an education free from Government control or influence and truer to national tradition and requirement. The immediate and aggressive reply to the Government policy of repression was the setting-up of an Anti-Circular Society. Its object was to rally the students through processions, picketings, collection of funds and creating an awareness by patriotic songs and speeches. It also sought to provide educational facilities to students expelled under Government orders or otherwise victimised.

**Genesis of National Education** Possibly the earliest use of the term "national education" was made by Prasanna-kumar Tagore in connection with the *Hindu College Pathsala* in June 1839. The efforts to organise the *Tattvabodhini Pathsala* (1840) and the *Hindu Hitharthi Vidyalyaya* (1846) also indicated a desire for a system of education that was totally free from any extraneous influence or control. The idea was further developed in the writings and teachings of Rajnarayan Bose. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Gurudas Banerjee and Rabindranath Tagore. But the real credit for organising and popularising national education belongs to Satischandra Mukherjee and his Dawn Society. He sought the introduction of such a system of education which besides causing intellectual development of the student would build his spiritual stature. The object of English education in India was narrow, being more



political and administrative. It only created a large number of ambitious job-seekers. Many patriotic Bengalis began to regard the University of Calcutta as *Goldighir Golamkhana*. Thus the Swadeshi upsurge, the Government Circulars and the resulting Anti-Circular Society made the foundation of the National Council of Education inevitable.

In a protest meeting held on 5 November, 1905, and addressed by the Poet himself, National Council of Education Satishchandra Mukherjee, Hirendranath Datta and other leaders, the idea of National Education took a more concrete shape. Subodh Chandra Mallick made an exemplary gift of a lakh of rupees and it was followed by another princely donation by the zamindars of Mymensingh. It was not long afterwards that the National Council of Education (*Jatiya Shiksha Parishad*) was formally inaugurated on 14 August, 1906. Under the aegis of the National Council of Education a number of National Schools were founded in various places. But these schools failed to survive for long in the absence of any real scope or opportunity for their students in future in view of the Government's hostility to the programme of 'national education.' But the Jadavpur Engineering College, established by the National Council of Education, continued to maintain a perilous but spirited existence. The transformation of this institution into the Jadavpur University in 1956 was a fitting finale, true tribute to the selfless service, idealism and devotion of its founders.

Gradually the Swadeshi movement extended its influence outside Bengal. Ideas of *Swadeshi* and National Education found sympathetic response in Bombay, U.P., Central Provinces, Madras, Bihar and other places. In spite of mounting Government repression and terror the movement continued unabated in Bengal. The people of the district of Barisal led by Aswini Kumar Datta and inspired by the popular patriotic songs of Mukunda Das braved with fine courage arrests and assaults, *lathi-charges* and flogging.

The same spirit was manifest in other parts of the province as well. A virtual reign of terror prevailed in East Bengal and Assam on which the *Manchester Guardian* commented : "It is doubtful if Russia can afford a parallel to this petty-fogging tyranny." Indiscriminate and merciless police attack on a procession organised by the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal (April, 1906), profoundly shocked the people. It only precipitated the explosion of revolutionary tendencies.

The chief exponents of the new nationalism or extremism, as it came to be called, were Tilak, Aurobindo and Lajpat Rai. In June, 1906, Tilak came to Calcutta and the *Sivaji* Festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The *Birastami* celebrations were organised to instill courage and strength into the younger people. The Government axe of repression fell heavily on the vernacular press, particularly on the *Bande Mataram* edited by Aurobindo Ghose, the *Yugantar* edited by Bhupendranath Datta and the *Sandhya* of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya. The last-named, charged with sedition, refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court. He stated that he was in no way "accountable to the alien people who happen to rule over us and whose interest is, and must necessarily be, in the way of our true national development." His premature death in the midst of the trial took away a most active mind and a remarkable personality of the age.

A feature of the Swadeshi movement was the large number of industrial strikes that took place during this period. Among the important ones were the strike organised by the employees of Burn Iron Works (Howrah), of the Government of India Press, Bengal Government Press, Fort Gloster Jute Mills, East Indian Railway, Calcutta Telegraph and some others. These strikes, originating in economic grievances but not altogether void of a "political tone", were supported by the nationalists as these were directed against European managements. Bengali newspapers often viewed the strikes favourably and the indus-

trial unrest was regarded as a contribution of the extremists. The *Bande Mataram* in an editorial (1907) welcomed national education, organisation of volunteers and labour strikes as unexpected developments which proved the 'divine nature' of the Swadeshi movement.

The Swadeshi movement facilitated the growth of revolutionary tendencies and it also precipitated the final break between the Moderates and the Extremists. Restrictions on meetings, impositions of collective fines, imprisonment of leaders and deterrent punishments failed to scotch the movement. The mighty upsurge caused by the partition did not subside even after the modification of the partition in 1911 unsettling a "settled fact". The partition of Bengal only widened the gulf between the Government and the intellectuals and "provided the hammer to the Congress anvil to make the sparks of the new patriotism fly upward".

**Limitations of the Swadeshi movement** The anti-Partition agitation culminating in the Swadeshi movement had its obvious limitations. The movement fell far short of its objective, an all-round industrial regeneration. The dream of national education hardly materialised. It took two more decades before complete independence was accepted by the nationalists, excepting the revolutionaries, as the goal of the freedom movement. The efforts to boycott foreign goods and promote Swadeshi industries left little permanent impression on the national economy. Rural uplift and organisation and industrial unrest proved ephemeral. The bulk of the population, the peasantry, could not really be brought within the fold of the movement. The movement failed to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity and could not offer any powerful resistance to the communal riots which continued to remain a dark feature of Indian politics. The growing popularity of the Muslim League and the intensification of communalism unmistakably indicated a fundamental and serious flaw of the struggle for independence. Undoubtedly, a fair number of Muslims had joined the Swadeshi movement. But there

is no denying of the fact that by and large the Muslim community stood aloof out of a fear of Hindu dominance which was steadily fanned by "mulla" propaganda and British policy. A recent study has suggested that the main weakness of the Swadeshi movement was its "inability to draw in the peasant masses and to bridge the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims." The weakness has been attributed to the socio-economic "structural limitations" of the movement and its inherited "cultural tradition".

Significance  
of the  
movement

Notwithstanding its limitations the Swadeshi movement occupies a unique place in the history of the Indian national struggle for independence. The movement which had started with limited objectives eventually merged with the broader current of Indian national movement. As Dr. R. C. Majumdar observes, "it was the *Swadeshi* movement which brought nationalism from a realm of theory and sentiments into the field of practical politics which leavened the life of India as a whole." It was no longer a question of partitioned or united Bengal. The issue was "whether British rule itself was to endure in Bengal or, for the matter of that, anywhere in India." Dr. Sumit Sarkar has pointed out that a remarkable feature of the Swadeshi movement was the "simultaneous presence in it, at least in germ, of so many of the tendencies and forces which went on shaping the life of our people till 1947 and even beyond." It anticipated "the techniques of Gandhian non-cooperation; volunteer organisations or samitis; labour unions with an element of political guidance; the use of the religious medium to overcome the barrier between the elite and the masses, and its unforeseen consequences in the sharpening of Hindu-Muslim tensions; the cult of the bomb....."

The Swadeshi movement was "not merely an economic or a political movement," but, according to Surendranath Banerjee, "an all-comprehensive movement co-extensive with the entire circle of our national life." Even Gokhale, the Moderate leader, who disapproved of the Boycott pro-

gramme as radical, regarded the movement as "a landmark in the history of national progress." He admitted that it "helped to draw closer all parts of the country in sympathy and aspiration." Mahatma Gandhi wrote that the real awakening of India "took place after the Partition of Bengal. After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering." Before 1905, politics was confined to the upper strata. "The nationalist movement in Bengal from 1906 onwards had for the first-time shaken this up and infused a new life in the Bengali lower middle-class and to a small extent even the masses." The above appraisal of Jawaharlal Nehru gives an insight into one of the salient features of the Swadeshi movement.

The general impact of the movement on the life and thought in Bengal was remarkable in many ways. The Swadeshi upsurge produced a rich harvest in the field of Bengali literature. It stimulated interest in literary history and folk traditions. It gave incentive to scientific studies and created interest in classical Indian music and painting. In view of the all pervasive influence of the Swadeshi movement it has justly been remarked that "No other phase of our national movement can boast of a cultural accompaniment as rich as Swadeshi."

### *Split in the Congress : Morley-Minto Reforms :*

The Congress, as has been noted above, was already divided into two groups—the Moderates and the Extremists. The Swadeshi movement precipitated the crisis in the Congress and underlined the split between the two sections. The movement encouraged the growth of a radical trend both inside and outside the Congress. The extremism of Tilak caught the imagination of the younger generation. Of this period Nehru writes in his *Autobiography* : "From 1907 onwards for several years India was seething with unrest and troubles. For the first

The  
Swadeshi  
movement  
fosters  
extremism

time since the Revolt of 1857 India was showing fight and not submitting tamely to foreign rule. News of Tilak's activities and his conviction, of Aurobinda Ghose and the way the masses of Bengal were taking the Swadeshi and boycott pledge stirred all of us Indians in England. Almost without an exception we were Tilakites or Extremists, as the new party was called in India."

The Moderate-Extremist breach widens Even many Moderates in the Congress were disillusioned about the much-eulogised British sense of justice and started leaning towards extremism. But the Moderates, in general, did not fully approve of the Boycott and National Education programmes. The Congress objective, as defined in 1905, was "Colonial form of self-government." In 1906 Dadabhai Naoroji, the Congress President, went a step further when he defined it as "self-government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." But the term *Swaraj* was far from clearly defined. To the Moderates, it implied self-government. To the Extremists, it meant complete autonomy free from alien rule. Aurobindo Ghose, one of the chief exponents of extremism, said, "Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation." He emphasised the doctrine of passive resistance as an effective weapon in the struggle against foreign rule. "The method of passive resistor", he explained, "is to abstain from doing something by which he would be helping the Government." The programme of Boycott was explained by him as "refusal of cooperation in the industrial exploitation of our country, in education, in government, in judicial administration, in the details of official intercourse."

The Moderates totally disagreed with the Extremist doctrines of passive resistance and political freedom. They viewed these ideas as harmful and impractical. Gokhale went so far as to say that "only mad men outside lunatic asylums could think or talk of independence." The Moderates firmly believed that there was no alternative to British rule for a long time to come and constitutional

agitation was the most suitable and effective form of continuing the national movement. Undoubtedly, there was much logic in the Moderate arguments. As one scholar writes, "it is difficult not to feel that the Moderates were *right at the time*, as Tilak was partly right for the future." But extremist ideas forged ahead owing to the inspiring leadership of Tilak, Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipinchandra Pal, Khaparde and others and the feelings and hopes raised by the Swadeshi movement.

Surat  
Session  
(1907) :  
the open  
rift

The breach between the Moderates and the Extremists was in the meantime widening. The indications of an impending showdown were evident in the Congress sessions of 1905 and 1906. The expected clash took place in the historic Surat Session of 1907. The issues on which the split came sharp were the resolutions on Self-Government, Boycott and National Education. The session practically ended in pandemonium with the Congress organisation in the hands of the Moderates and the abrupt secession of the Extremists from the body.

The Moderates pinned their hopes on British rule "which alone could secure to the country the peace and order which were necessary for slowly evolving a nation out of the heterogeneous elements of which India was composed and for ensuring to it a steady advance in different directions" Continuance of British rule was, according to the Moderates, necessary for the best interests of the people.

The attempt  
to "rally" the  
Moderates

The Moderates' firm faith in the British sense of justice and in the efficiency of the British rule have been attributed to the appointment of John Morley as the Secretary of State for India and Lord Minto as Viceroy. The increasing feeling of despondency coupled with manifestation of revolutionary trends called for immediate remedial measures in the form of constitutional reforms. It was evident that a mere policy of repression would not ease the mounting tension heading for a crisis. The new Viceroy Lord

Minto contemplated a more "sympathetic" and "just" policy and he did not wish to underrate the Indian National Congress like his predecessor Curzon. But he also felt that the Congress was being dangerously dominated by the Bengalis. Minto was averse to the importation of Western political institutions into India. He only envisaged one Indian member in the Executive Council, a Council of Native Princes and a Council of Landowners and influential people.

On the other hand Morley, who had several meetings with the Moderate leader Gokhale in London, believed that unless the Congress demands were at least partially met these would assume more serious proportions. At the same time Morley was aware of the separatist feeling of the Muslims and he was eagerly looking forward to a detente with them. In August, 1906, the Aga Khan led a Muslim delegation to Lord Minto to plead for separate Muslim electorate in the coming constitutional reforms. In 1906, on the initiative of Nawab Salimullah was founded the Muslim League to remove the need of a political organisation for the Muslims. The Moderate-Extremist split and the growing popularity of the Extremists also worried Morley who was anxious to do something "in the Moderate direction" to "draw the teeth of the Extremists". The ascendancy of the Extremist leaders like Tilak and Bipinchandra Pal worried the Viceroy as well. Thus the Indian political situation and the considerations mentioned above prompted the British Government to "rally" the Moderates by granting reforms. At the same time effort was made to placate the Muslims by conceding the demand for 'separate electorates' and 'weightage.'

The new policy was proclaimed in the form of Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) which came into force as the Indian Councils Act of 1909. This was "a practical attempt to control and canalise the now fast-flowing current of Indian nationalism." Its provisions included appointment of an Indian member of the Governor-General's Executive Council as well as of



the Provincial Executive Councils. Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (later Lord Sinha of Raipur) was the first Indian Member of the Governor-General's Council. The number of members of the Imperial and the Provincial Legislative Councils was increased. The Executive Councils of Bombay and Madras were enlarged and the Act of 1909 provided for the establishment of similar Councils in provinces ruled by Lieutenant-Governors. The principle of election was introduced in the constitution of these bodies. But an official majority was retained at the Centre. In the Provincial Legislatures the non-official members had the majority but the nominated members usually voted with the official members. The constitutional reforms had serious limitations. The elected members were elected by a very narrow electorate.. The powers of the Legislature were very restricted. Many important issues of public interest such as the Army, Foreign Relations, Native States, etc., could not be debated. The Act of 1909 conceded the Muslim demand for separate representation by members chosen by a Muslim electorate. Thus the principle of communal representation was introduced.

The Reforms  
prove  
unsatisfactory

Though the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 are regarded as an important landmark in the history of constitutional changes in India, they failed to satisfy both the Moderates and the Extremists. The former were at first jubilant, but the jubilation was rather shortlived as the 'Divide and Rule' policy behind the Reforms became quite evident even to casual observers among them. The new Act was undoubtedly an advancement on the past one, but at the back of it loomed up the "shadow of Pakistan". The Lahore Session of the Congress (1909) expressed its strong disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion. Gokhale considered the Reforms unjust on similar grounds. Surendranath felt that the Reforms fell far short of the expectations of the Indians "in regard to many matters of vital importance."

It is important to note that the promoters of the

Morley-Minto Reforms did not think in terms of democracy. Morley himself categorically stated, "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it." Significantly, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) had to concede that the Morley-Minto Reforms could not justly be described "as embodying any new policy. The change was one of degree and not of kind."

The Indian Councils Act of 1909 failed to produce the desired results. Even many of the Moderates were drifting away from the Government. The new Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, repealed the Partition of Bengal in December, 1911, with the hope that it would stem the tide of rising nationalism and restore peace. But a bomb attack on him a few days later put an end to any such hope. It revealed that the malady was far too deep-rooted and extensive to be cured so easily.

*War-Time Nationalism : Home Rule Movement :  
Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms :*

Dubious loyalty during the First World War      The Moderate victory in the Surat Session proved ephemeral. Without the Extremists the Congress became more a party organisation than a national body. The Extremists also found it difficult to set up an effective organisation. Besides the Government repressive measures, the imprisonment of Tilak and the retirement of Aurobindo from politics (February, 1910) affected the Extremists appreciably.

During the First World War (1914—1918), Indians in general remained loyal and co-operative in return for which they expected fulfilment of the demand for Self-Government. On this Nehru writes : "There was little sympathy with the British in spite of loud professions of loyalty. Moderate and Extremist alike learnt with satisfaction of German victories. There was no love

for Germany of course, only the desire to see our own rulers humbled." Nationalism all over the Asiatic world had made tremendous progress during the last few years. The success of Japan over Russia (1905), the Young Turk Movement (1908), The Persian Movement (1909) and the Chinese Revolution (1911) had deeply impressed the Indian nationalists. These had made them impatient with the British rule. "The older nationalists had been hoping for the freedom of their children or their children's children—the younger ones were hoping now to live to be free themselves."

Tilak, after his release in June, 1914, was keen on Moderate-Extremist unity. The declaration of war against the Allies by Turkey brightened the prospect of an alliance between the Muslim League and the Congress. Both the Congress and the League held their sessions at Lucknow in 1916. Here an alliance was concluded between the two parties which became famous as the Lucknow Pact. By this Pact the League demand for 'separate electorates' was accepted by the Congress. A joint scheme of constitutional advance on the basis of Dominion Status was adopted. It was no doubt a Congress "surrender to Moslems" but the sight of the League and the Congress marching together for a common cause raised big expectations among the nationalists. The Muslim League, though prompted by their concern for Turkey and the Caliphate, had nevertheless, to some extent, overcome the fears deeply planted by the Aligarh Movement. In that respect the Pact was "a triumph for Indian nationalism", though it ultimately failed to stand the test of time.

The Lucknow Session of the Congress also saw the re-union of the two parties—the Moderates and the Extremists. It was made possible largely owing to the initiative of Mrs. Annie Besant and the keenness of Tilak. The latter wished to make the Congress "more progressive, more militant, more active." The re-union, however, was

of doubtful value and it was soon wrecked on the issue of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The Moderates were losing their hold on the nationalist politics. The death of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915 had weakened the party. Tilak was now looked upon as the leader of the national struggle and the new Home Rule Movement caught the imagination of the people.

### *The Home Rule Movement :*

The Home Rule League of Mrs. Besant      Mrs. Besant, the celebrated leader of the Theosophic movement and known for her social and educational activities, joined the national movement in 1914. She sought to rouse public opinion in England in favour of the Indian demand for self-government. She founded a Home Rule League in September, 1915, with the object of demanding "Home Rule for India." The Home Rule League was not welcomed by the Moderates. They thought that its programme overlapped the Congress objective and would weaken the Congress. Branches of the Home Rule League were founded in Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, Kanpur and other places. Mrs. Besant worked untiringly to popularise the idea of Home Rule among the masses through personal contact and the two organs *New India* and *Common Weal*.

The Indian Home Rule League founded by Tilak (1916)      Another great protagonist of the Home Rule idea was Tilak. On his initiative was founded the Indian Home Rule League in April, 1916. Its object was "to attain Home Rule or Self-Government within the British Empire by all constitutional means and to educate and organize public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same." Through his writings and speeches he raised public support for the scheme of *Swaraj*. His intense patriotism, selfless service to the cause of nationalism and bold leadership earned for Tilak the affectionate honorific *Lokamanya*.

**Home Rule Movement : its significance**      The two Home Rule Leagues of Mrs. Besant and Tilak worked in close co-operation. The movement made rapid progress and created great public enthusiasm. This caused the Government serious concern and it took measures to check its progress. Mrs Besant was interned which caused popular resentment. It only helped to excite the intelligentsia and vitalised the Home Rule Movement. The Home Rule Leagues pressed for a demand that had no chance of immediate realisation. Thus the movement had an inherent weakness and its failure was inevitable. Yet, the achievements of the Home Rule movement were not insignificant. The Government promise of progress towards Self-Government may partly be ascribed to the Home Rule agitation. The agitation gave the demand for *Swaraj* a national character. However, there were regional variations in the nature and strength of the Home Rule Movement. It was most powerful in Maharashtra and Karnataka—strongholds of Tilak. Mrs. Besant's League had followers in the city of Bombay and in Gujarat, Sind, United Provinces, Bihar etc. In Madras also Mrs. Besant's League had many supporters. The Home Rule Movement underlined the necessity of national organisation at local level. It has been pointed out by Dr. H. F. Owen that the League's "channels of communications" proved very useful in future mass movements. Finally, the Home Rule Movement "imparted a sense of impatience to the national movement as a whole", and precipitated the demand for independence.

**The British Government announce a new policy (1917)**      Even the Moderates were displeased with the Government action. The Congress and the Muslim League were considering the question of adopting Passive Resistance for achieving political objectives which made the Government much concerned, particularly as the British then were wholly preoccupied with the First World War. The public opinion in England was also running in favour of adopting a new and more liberal policy

to the Indian problem. The British Government had to take cognizance of the changing situation and announce a new policy. The announcement made on 20 August, 1917, by Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, stated : "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Montagu-  
Chelmsford  
Report  
(April,  
1918)

Montagu came to India to ascertain public opinion and discuss the practical aspects of the policy enunciated. Its outcome was the famous Montagu-Chelmsford *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (22 April, 1918).

The main features of the recommendations were Dyarchy and devolution of power by the Home Government to the Government of India, and by the latter to the Provincial Governments. The Report formally pronounced Responsible Government as the goal for India. Dyarchy, a kind of double government, was to be introduced in the provinces. Important departments such as finance, police, general administration, etc. were to be dealt with by the Governor, and an Executive Council of two members, responsible only to the Government of India and Parliament. These important departments or subjects were called "Reserved Subjects". Less important departments, called "Transferred Subjects", were to be dealt with by Ministers chosen from the elected members of the Provincial Legislature. The Ministers would be responsible to the Legislative Council for the subjects placed under them. Other recommendations included addition of one more Indian to the Governor-General's Executive Council, enlargement of legislatures, extension of the franchise, separation of Central and Provincial budgets, etc. The Report laid stress on the necessity of rapid Indianisation of the services. Separate electorates were provided for the Sikhs in the Punjab. The

substance of the recommendations were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, which came into force in 1921.

The Report causes final split in the Congress

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report belied the great expectations raised by the original announcement of Montagu. The new Act undoubtedly marked considerable progress in the process of constitutional development started in 1861. Still it fell far short of the demand and expectation of the Indian nationalists. Two of its most serious limitations were that the legislature had virtually no control over the Governor-General and his Executive Council. But the Central Government was given extensive control over the provinces. Secondly, the franchise was strictly limited. The Report caused the final split in the Congress. The Moderates welcomed the Report and viewed it as a definite advancement to the realisation of self-government. They were in favour of giving the reforms a trial and keen on co-operating with the Government in implementing the Act. Explaining the Moderate stand, Surendranath writes, "We accepted the Reforms for what they were worth. We knew their limitations. But in the existing circumstances it seemed to us that the best thing we could do was to work them, to qualify for more and press for more. Here was an opportunity for peaceful, orderly and progressive realization of self-government." But the Extremists were thoroughly disappointed with the Report and favoured its total rejejection. The Moderates had by now lost their hold on the Congress organisation which was at the moment dominated by the Extremists led by Tilak. Even Montagu has said : "The Congress is completely identified with Home Rule."

Moderates set up the Indian Liberal Federation

In a special session in Bombay (August, 1918) the Congress reiterated the demand for Self-Government and condemned the Report as inadequate, disappointing and unsatisfactory. It passed a number of resolutions proposing modifications. The Moderate leaders, in view of the known attitude of the Extremists who had a vast

majority in the Congress, boycotted the session. Most of the Moderates, leaving the Congress, later founded the Indian Liberal Federation, and came to be known as Liberals.

Rising  
tide of  
nationalism :  
Causes of  
Extremist  
doubts

It is not difficult to explain the Extremist attitude of hostility to the new proposals. During the First World War nationalism had made rapid strides in India. The expectations of the Indian industrialists of industrial development and prosperity had not materialised. There was greater economic hardship for the common people. The course of international developments gave impetus to the growth of Indian nationalism. During the First World War the Western Powers like Britain, France, United States, etc., had spoken eloquently of democracy and the right of self-determination of all people.. But the Versailles Settlement exposed the hollowness of such pronouncements. The dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire led to the beginning of the Khilafat Movement. The Russian Revolution of 1917, the proclamation of the Irish Republic by the Sinn Fein party, the growth of Egyptian nationalism under the Nationalist Party of Zaghlul Pasha, the May Fourth Movement in China and other events in different parts of the world indicated the rising tide of nationalism. Thus, it was not easy for Indian nationalists, as Coupland admits, "to accept the claim of a foreign Parliament to decide whether and where and to what extent Indians had shown themselves fit for self-government." Besides this was involved the question of British sincerity and intentions. The Indian nationalists had their doubts which were soon confirmed by the notorious Rowlatt Bills and the atrocious incidents in the Punjab.

In the meantime the Home Rule Movement had become more popular and powerful. The Government's refusal to give passports to a Home Rule delegation to England led by Tilak caused much discontent and agitation. Ultimately, Tilak was allowed to leave for England in September, 1919, where he sought to popularise the



Indian nationalist view-points through meetings, speeches and conferences.

### *Revolutionary Activities :*

Revolutionary activities or 'terrorism', as these were popularly known, constituted an important aspect of the Indian struggle for independence. Outside the broad sphere of Congress politics a militant spirit of nationalism had been growing steadily. These militant nationalists had no faith in the apparently laborious and long path of constitutional agitations. These men, very small in number but charged with fiery patriotism and bitter hatred for the foreign rule, thought of more direct and violent ways of ending the British rule in India.

Early revolutionary activities Towards the end of the nineteenth century secret societies were formed in Bengal and Maharashtra. The young revolutionaries received inspiration from the writings and speeches of Tilak, Aurobindo, Bankimchandra, Swami Vivekananda and others. A number of secret societies formed in Bengal in the last quarter of the nineteenth century did not have any concrete revolutionary plan or programme. But one of the earliest possible efforts was that of W. B. Phadke of Bombay. He founded a revolutionary society with the object of putting an end to the British rule in India by organising an armed rebellion. The scheme failed and Phadke suffered terribly. But his name and efforts continued to serve as an inspiring example for future Indian revolutionaries. After a comparative period of lull, revolutionary activities revived partly owing to the influences of the *Ganapati* and *Sivaji* festivals organised by Tilak. The most notable incident was the execution of the Chapekar brothers in 1897 for murdering two unpopular British officers in Poona. There were sporadic revolutionary activities in western and central India towards the end of the nineteenth century. Notable among the revolutionary societies of the period was the *Arya Bandhab Samaj*

with which Tilak was connected. Among other members of this association were P. S. Khankhoje, Vrajachand Potdar and Jamnalal Bajaj

Anushilan  
Samity

Revolutionary tendencies were rapidly growing in Bengal. One of the pioneers of revolutionary activities in Bengal was Pramatha Mitra, a barrister. He was the President of the *Anushilan Samity*, one of the earliest and most famous secret societies in Bengal. It received active help and encouragement from Swami Saradananda, Sister Nivedita and Aurobindo Ghose. In 1902, seeking to promote armed insurrection in Bengal, Aurobindo's emissary Jatin Bandopadhyay met Pramathanath Mitra of the *Anushilan Samity*. Soon after Aurobindo himself came to Calcutta and initiated at Midnapore, a group of youngmen, including Hemchandra Kanungo and Satyen Bose into the revolutionary movement. The struggle of the French revolutionaries and the Italian nationalists served as models for their Indian counterpart. Sister Nivedita's *Kali the Mother* profoundly influenced Aurobindo and partly inspired his *Bhavani Mandir* (1905) which glorified the worship of *Bhavani*, a manifestation of *Sakti*. Also connected with the growth of the *Anushilan Samity* and revolutionary ideas in Bengal were Barindrakumar Ghose, Surendranath Tagore, Sarala Devi and many others. There was a close contact between the revolutionaries of Bengal and Maharashtra. This was largely owing to the efforts of Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar—a Marathi scholar who made significant contribution to the growth of nationalism and national education in Bengal.

The growing  
impatience  
with the  
British rule

The Swadeshi movement greatly helped the growth of revolutionary tendencies. Moreover, contemporary current of world events had a telling effect on the young patriots in the Punjab, Maharashtra, Central India, Bengal and other parts of the country. The defeat of the Italian Army at Adowa in 1894 at the hands of the Abyssinians, the victory of Japan over mighty Russia, the Young Turk movement etc., made the young patriotic Indians more emotional and

impatient. On this state of feeling at the turn of the century Coupland writes : "Freedom as a far-off goal was no longer enough. They wanted it not only for their sons but for themselves. And it was not so much with the backward state of India that they felt impatient now : it was with the British Raj." Radical papers and journals gave vent to this feeling of discontent and impatience. The Government policy of terror and repression and attempts to gag the press led to outbreak of violence. Bombs were manufactured and attempts on the lives of unpopular government officials became frequent. An attempt was made on the life of a most unpopular judge named Kingsford by Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki on 30 April, 1908. Prafulla Chaki committed suicide to evade arrest and Khudiram was tried and hanged. Both these young revolutionaries became household names in Bengal and were honoured among the first martyrs to the cause of freedom. A few days later the police searched and found a bomb factory in Maniktala, Calcutta and arrested a large number of revolutionaries including Aurobindo and his brother Barindra Kumar Ghose. The trial of these men became famous as the Alipore Bomb Case. In course of the trial the approver, the Public Prosecutor and a police officer were assassinated. Most of the accused were convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and transportation for life. But Aurobindo was acquitted mainly owing to the brilliant pleading of his counsel C. R. Das.

*Ahlinava  
Bharat*

The Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* led by Pulin-bihari Das continued to carry out terrorist activities and revolutionary propaganda with great zeal. Branches of the *Anushilan Samiti* had also sprang up in other parts of East Bengal, North Bengal, Chandernagore and other places. Similar secret societies had also been formed in Bihar, Orissa, the Punjab, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madras. Notable among the revolutionaries in the Punjab during this period were Ajit Singh, Amba Prasad, Lala Hardayal and Lajpat Rai. The last named,

though actively connected with the Congress, had secret contact with the revolutionaries. In Maharashtra foremost among the revolutionary associations was the *Abhinava Bharat* set up in 1904. V. D. Savarkar, later to become famous as a Hindu Mahasabha leader, was one of the most active and leading revolutionaries in Maharashtra. The *Abhinava Bharat* did much to disseminate revolutionary ideas among the youth by emphasising on physical culture which included sword and lathi plays, riding, swimming and mountain-climbing. The educational institutions provided good breeding ground for revolutionary ideas and activities. One of its members, P. N. Bapat, was sent to Paris to learn the art of bomb-making from Russian revolutionaries. The *Abhinava Bharat* had close contact with other secret societies of western and central India. A plot to manufacture bombs was discovered by the police. This led to the Kolhapur Bomb Case in which the convicted revolutionaries had to suffer long terms of imprisonment. K. G. Khare and Karve in Maharashtra, Arjun Lal Sethi, Bharat Keshari Singh, Rao Gopal Singh in Rajasthan, Vanchi Aiyar, Nilakanta Brahmachari in Madras were some of the well-known revolutionaries of this period. Revolutionary activities had intensified in Bengal and in December, 1908, several prominent Bengali leaders, including Aswini Kumar Datta and Krishna Kumar Mitra, were deported. The same year Tilak was sentenced to 6 years' transportation which caused great excitement throughout the country.

Indian revolutionaries were also conducted outside India in Indo-abroad Revolutionary activities and propaganda China, Singapore, Siam, Afghanistan, in the U.S. and in Germany. One of the pioneers among Indian revolutionaries abroad was Shyamji Krishnavarma. In 1905 he founded the Indian Home Rule Society in London and started the journal *Indian Sociologist*. He gathered round him a group of revolutionaries and the centre of their activities was the 'Indian House' founded by Shyamji in London. A close associate of Shyamji was Madam

Kama. She continued revolutionary propaganda in Europe and America. Among other notable Indian revolutionaries abroad were Raja Mahendra Pratap and Sardar Singh Rana. In 1913 the Ghadar Party was formed in the U.S. with Indian workers and students, mostly Punjabis, with the object of overthrowing the British rule. For some time the Ghadar movement was very active in the U.S. and drew public attention. A few years earlier Taraknath Das and others had founded the Indian Independence League (1907) in California. Lala Hardayal was one of the most active members of the League.

During all these years revolutionary activities had intensified in Bengal. Attempts were made during the First World War to establish contact with Indian revolutionaries abroad. One of the most remarkable efforts was a secret scheme of an armed rebellion with arms and ammunitions imported from abroad with German help. The plot was unearthed by the police. But the plot was made memorable by a heroic struggle put up by Jatindranath Mukherjee against the police forces at Balasore in course of which he courted death valiantly on 9 September, 1915. For his unique courage and fighting qualities Jatindranath earned the affectionate honorific of *Bagha* (Tiger) Jatin. Rash Behari Bose was another well-known revolutionary of this period. Enjoying a high position in public life he was secretly connected with revolutionary activities in northern India. He was the brain behind the attempted assassination of Viceroy Hardinge (December, 1912). After the failure of a plot of armed rising in February, 1915, he escaped to Japan and continued his revolutionary activities there.

## CHAPTER V

### A NEW LEADER AND A NEW ERA

**Rowlatt Act (1919)** Visible signs of unrest among the masses, post-war atmosphere of expectation mixed with fear and anxiety and the spread of revolutionary activities prompted the Government to perpetuate its wartime reactionary measures. In 1919 a Committee headed by Mr. Justice Rowlatt was appointed to investigate the alarming growth of revolutionary activities and to make recommendations for their effective suppression. The Committee in its Report suggested most coercive measures with curtailment of the liberty of the people. On the basis of the Report was passed the ill-famed Rowlatt Act which provided for arrest and trial even without a show of normal legal procedure.

**Disappointment of the Moderates** The Rowlatt Act roused the people's righteous indignation and stirred even the Moderates to raise their voice of protest. Surendranath warned that there would be agitation, "intense, bitter, widespread, accentuated by deep discontent," and asked, "Is this a prospect which the Government contemplates with unconcern?" His anger and disappointment was understandable. The Moderates were expectantly looking forward to constitutional reforms. But the Rowlatt Act followed by a policy of unprecedented repression discredited the Moderates and their policy. They had already lost control of the Congress and now their political future looked bleak.

**Gandhiji assumes leadership** The anti-Rowlatt Act agitation brought to the fore of the national movement a new leader

with a new technique, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He had first attracted attention by his successful application of *Satyagraha* or passive moral resistance for vindicating the rights of the Indians in South Africa. On his return from South Africa he had been drawn to the Indian national movement. He had founded an *Ashrama* at Ahmedabad (1915) on the banks of the Sabarmati to teach Indians the ideals and method of *Satyagraha*. In April, 1917, he earned admiration by leading a 'successful movement, rather a mission, which put an end to the miserable sufferings of the peasants of Champaran in North Bihar. His recourse to the first of his many historic fasts had led to a satisfactory settlement of a long-drawn dispute between mill-owners and labourers of Ahmedabad.

*Satyagraha* Gandhiji's appeal to the Viceroy against the Rowlatt Bills was ignored. He then assumed leadership of the first all-India agitation. He founded the *Satyagraha Sabha* whose members were pledged to disobey the Act and court arrest voluntarily. This novel method of agitation appealed to the Indian people. The first reaction of the young nationalists, as Nehru writes, was "one of tremendous relief". It was to them "a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective." The whole country witnessed a unique and spontaneous outburst of mass agitation. The Government tried to put it down with an iron hand and did not hesitate to take atrocious and brutal steps. But the most heinous criminal action was that of General Dyer. His troops opened relentless fire without warning on thousands of unarmed people assembled for a prohibited meeting at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar (13 April, 1919). There was no means of exit from the park and scores of people were killed and injured in the firing. The massacre of Jallianwala Bagh was followed by martial law and a veritable reign of terror in the Punjab. The shocking and dreadful news of Government atrocities in the Punjab profoundly pained and moved all sections of

Punjab  
happenings

Jallianwala  
Bagh  
massacre

Indians. The feelings of the people were voiced by Rabindranath in his immortal letter to the Viceroy renouncing the Knighthood as a protest against the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh. As soon as the martial law was withdrawn relief work was organised led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Swami Shraddhananda and others.

Gandhiji was deeply grieved at the Punjab incidents. But he was more distressed to see that the agitation started by him had not altogether been free from violence, for *Ahimsa* was one of the cardinal principles of *Satyagraha*. He admitted his failure to apply *Satyagraha* in its true spirit and regretted his "Himalayan miscalculation."

The Amritsar Session of the Congress (December, 1919) was the "first Gandhi Congress." Gandhiji emerged from it as the leader of the national movement. Motilal Nehru had appealed to the Liberals to join this session. He urged on them to respond to the call of "the lacerated heart of the Punjab." But the appeal went unheeded. The Congress had already denounced the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms as unsatisfactory. Still Gandhiji persuaded the Congress to soften its attitude so as to give the new Reforms a fair trial. But it did not take long before the national movement changed its course and Gandhiji's policy and programme took an altogether different line. The sudden and dramatic change was caused by two incidents. These were, firstly, the rousing welcome accorded to General Dyer on his arrival in England; secondly, the beginning of the Khilafat movement in India. Gandhiji supported the Khilafat movement as he saw in it the possibility of cementing Hindu-Muslim unity—a cause which was very dear to his heart. But before dwelling on the origin of the Khilafat and the subsequent Non-Co-operation Movement it is necessary to review the growth of Muslim consciousness and the Muslim attitude to political developments in the preceding years.



*Muslim attitude : the Aligarh Movement and its effect on Muslim political ideas :*

Muslim  
backward-  
ness in the  
19th  
Century :  
its causes

In all spheres of life and thought in the 19th Century the Muslims in India were decidedly less advanced than the Hindus. This backwardness was very much in evidence in the slow growth of political consciousness and national sentiment. That Indian nationalism and political agitation in the 19th Century had a distinct Hindu element and leadership cannot be overlooked. One of the weaknesses of the nationalist movement was that it failed to develop a pan-Indian patriotism. This was perhaps unavoidable and natural under existing conditions, but nevertheless unfortunate. The explanation is, however, not far to seek. The Muslims in general were hostile to the establishment of the British rule in India. It was Muslim rule which the British had supplanted. Not unnaturally "Moslem minds leapt back across the interval in which the Moghul Empire was collapsing to the period of its prime and regarded the British as usurpers of the Moghul throne." The introduction of secular English education and the replacement of the Persian by the English language naturally hurt their pride. The Muslims suffered from a sense of humiliation which caused their indifference, if not antipathy to English education. But English education, it was not realised, was the most important contributing factor to Indian awakening and political awareness. Thus Muslims failed to fruitfully participate in the general development which owed its origin to Western thought and science. New political ideas meant little to them, while "probably the average Hindu student at this time knew more about liberal doctrines and nationalist movements in Europe than most young Englishmen."

Muhammadan  
Literary and  
Scientific  
Society  
(1863) and

Thus, while nationalism was fast spreading among the Hindu intelligentsia, the Muslim in general remained aloof. The Wahabi movement had some repercussions on the Indian

**National Mahomedan Association (1878)** Muslims but it hardly left any lasting influence. In comparison with numerous predominantly Hindu organisations there were only a few notable Muslim organisations.

In 1863, Nawab Abdul Latif founded the Muhammadan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta. This organisation essentially had social and educational purpose and it represented those Muslims of Bengal who wished to adopt "English education and European customs." The Society strictly kept itself aloof from politics and was very vocal in expressing its loyalty to the Crown. In 1878, Amir Ali established the National Mahomedan Association. This body also expressed its concern for English education and loyalty to the British rule. They considered Abdul Latif too conservative. Amir Ali believed that Government help was necessary for the revival and progress of the Muslims. He turned down Surendranath's invitation to join the Indian Association because he felt that the Muslims needed a political association of their own. The fear of Hindu domination was deeply rooted in his mind. The National Mahomedan Association raised the demand for preferential treatment for the Muslims and sought to popularise its programme all over the country. For some time the Association thought in terms of co-operation with the Hindus and it even helped in the organisation of the second National Conference in Calcutta in 1885. But the spirit of co-operation soon disappeared.

**Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898)** A new era was ushered in by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He came of an aristocratic well-to-do Muslim family of Delhi. Beginning from a lower rank in the Civil Service, he rose to the enviable position of a member of the Governor-General's Council in 1878. He wrote a book on the causes of the Indian Revolt of 1857 in which he denied the official conviction that the Muslims were mainly responsible for the Mutiny. Syed Ahmad believed that unless the Muslims remained loyal to the British rulers and accepted Western education they could not hope to make progress and compete with the

Hindus for higher positions. He wrote that the Muslims should welcome the system of education introduced by the British, otherwise they would not only remain a backward community but also "sink lower and lower until there will be no hope of recovery left to them." Keenly aware of the backwardness of his community Syed Ahmad rightly diagnosed the malady, originating in the apathy to English education. He urged the Muslims to react positively to Western education and modern scientific knowledge. He also advocated social reforms in Muslim society on rational lines. In 1864 he started the Translation

Aligarh  
College  
founded  
(1877)

Society, later renamed Scientific Society of Aligarh. A short visit to England in 1869 impressed him immensely and made him a more ardent admirer of English culture and education. English education, according to him, was a desideratum for the Muslims in India. So he founded at Aligarh in 1877 the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College for imparting English education to the Muslims. The institution, later to become the Muslim University of Aligarh, rendered great service to Muslim educational advancement and political consciousness.

Growth of  
separatism :  
Fear of  
Hindu  
domination  
planted

Syed Ahmad was a patriot. He supported the demand for Indian representation in the Councils. He had great admiration for the role of the Bengalis in the awakening of India. He said, "Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country." He pleaded for Hindu-Muslim co-operation and unity. But gradually Syed Ahmad became inclined to the view that as the Hindus were far ahead of the Muslims in education and other respects, the Muslims in their own interest should keep away from the new nationalism. Moreover, in view of Muslim backwardness and minority, all political concessions to Indians should be accompanied by safeguards for the Muslims. He firmly planted among them the fear

of Hindu dominance in case representative government was introduced in India. His attitude was that Democracy being majority rule, would in India mean Hindu rule. So he vigorously opposed the demand for the introduction of the elective system in India. He argued in 1886 that the country was unprepared for representative government. Two years later Syed Ahmad, in a speech, invited the British rulers to remain in India for her peace and prosperity "for many years—in fact, for ever." He urged the members of his community to co-operate with the British.

This, according to him, was essential to avoid eclipse and absorption by the Hindus. He was opposed to the Congress and its programme. Badruddin Tyabji, who presided over the third session of the Indian National Congress in Madras (1887), tried unsuccessfully to allay the apprehensions and enlist the support of the Muslims who opposed the Congress. As a counter to National Congress Syed Ahmad founded the United Patriotic Association in 1888. Two years earlier in 1886, he had founded the Annual Muslim Educational Conference which helped to disseminate Muslim political ideas. Thus, as Coupland observes, "The Moslem recoil from Congress nationalism was mainly Ahmad's doing".

Role of  
Beck

The centre of this new Muslim outlook and policy was the Aligarh College for which it became famous as the Aligarh Movement. A zealous exponent of the new doctrine was Theodore Beck, the Principal of the College from 1883 to 1899. This young scholar from Cambridge has been viewed as the real architect of Muslim separatism. His mouthpiece was the College organ *Institute Gazette*. Beck argued that parliamentary system of government was meaningless in a country like India which contained "two or more nations tending to oppress the numerically weaker." Beck disfavoured competitive examinations as they would give "unjust advantage to Bengalis." He argued that the principle of proportionate representation of different classes

in high government posts was unworkable in India. Some scholars believe that Beck was responsible for the growth of Muslim hostility to the Congress. But as Dr. Anil Seal rightly points out, "Beck fired the opening shots in the campaign, but his arguments were so similar to Syed's that it is difficult to tell whether it was he who followed Syed's lead or Syed his." The Aligarh Movement succeeded in alienating the bulk of the Muslims from the national movement and in doing so, sowed the seeds of the "two-nation" theory.

The Government encourages the growth of separatism

The "two-nation" theory and Muslim separatism received encouragement from the British Government as it presented them with a very handy and effective weapon to weaken nationalist forces. Viceroy Dufferin challenged the Congress claim to represent all Indians. He wrote in 1888, "Already it looks as if the Mohammedans were rising in revolt against the ascendancy which they imagine a rival and less virile race is desirous of obtaining over them." Lord Curzon also had similar ideas. One of the driving motives behind the decision to partition Bengal was to cause division among the people and gain Muslim loyalty and support. The Swadeshi movement succeeded in drawing some Muslim leaders within its fold. But the Muslim masses in general remained unresponsive or indifferent to keeping pace with the main current and directional trends of Indian nationalism. They had viewed with suspicion and apprehension the Extremists' action of recalling the past glories of Hindu India by holding the *Sivaji* and *Ganapati* festivals. The Muslims of East Bengal, led by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, welcomed the Partition in the hope of gaining preference and other advantages in the new Province. The annual Muslim Educational Conference held in December, 1906, welcomed and approved the Partition of Bengal. The Aga Khan led a Muslim delegation in August, 1906, to plead for separate Muslim electorates in the coming constitutional reforms. The demand, as stated above, was conceded in the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909.

Foundation of the Muslim League (1906)      The separatist Muslim leaders felt the necessity of independent organisation and action and they wished to secure, as the Aga Khan wrote, "independent political recognition from the British Government as a nation within a nation". To remove the long-felt need of a political organisation for the Muslims was founded in 1906, the All-India Muslim League. The initiative was taken by Nawab Shalimullah Khan of Dacca. The objects of the League were :

- (1) To promote loyalty to the British Government.
- (2) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India and respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.
- (3) To prevent the rise among Muslims of any feelings of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other objects of the League.

The Muslim League firmly adhered to the policy of separation, welcomed the partition of Bengal, opposed the national movement led by the Congress and condemned the Swadeshi movement. The principle of 'separate electorate', originally devised by Morley and Minto, and conceded in the Morley-Minto Reforms, satisfied the Muslims but widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. In spite of Congress abhorrence and opposition the communal approach began to be clearly lined. The annulment of partition was a bitter disappointment for many Muslims in East Bengal who regarded it, in the words of Dr. J. H. Brownfield, as "an unwarranted destruction of a great opportunity for a community that was in need of assistance". Intermittent communal riots worsened the already strained relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. This proved a stumbling block in the path of a united struggle for Self-Government. The Lucknow Pact of 1916, however, considerably improved the situation. The defeat and humiliation of Turkey in the First World War and the British policy towards the former offended the

feelings of Indian Muslims and led to the Khilafat movement.

*Khilafat leads to Non-Co-operation :*

**Gandhiji supports Khilafat movement**      The main object of the Khilafat movement was to force the British Government to change its attitude to Turkey and restore the Turkish Sultan, i.e., the *Khalif* to his former position. The movement was started in India in 1920 by the Ali brothers, Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. Gandhiji had genuine sympathy for the cause and he saw in it an opportunity for cementing the Hindu-Muslim entente as "will not occur for another hundred years." The Congress lent full support to the movement. In March, 1920, Gandhiji issued a manifesto in which he announced his famous doctrine of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation for mobilising the people for a united mass movement.

**Factors behind the emergence of Gandhiji**      The emergence of Gandhiji as the leader of the Indian national movement and the Congress acceptance of the non-co-operation policy and Gandhian technique of struggle did not prove very easy. Gandhiji's personal charm and magnetism, persuasiveness and charismatic personality undoubtedly contributed to his assumption of leadership. But he was also helped by some other factors. The inherent weakness of the Home Rule Movement leading to its decline, the eclipse of the Moderates, the dilemma of the Extremists and the death of Tilak left the field open for the rise of a new leadership.

However, it was not easy for other nationalist leaders to be convinced of the efficacy and wisdom of Gandhiji's policy and technique. Analysing the factors behind the Non-Co-operation Decision of 1920, Dr. J. H. Broomfield has shown that the "Hindu *bhadralok* politicians" did not view with favour a people's movement of the kind which Gandhiji proposed to launch. The *bhadralok* or the middle-class 'respectable people', Broomfield argues, "did not

understand the 'masses' and they felt no confidence in their ability to lead or even control them should the existing order of political and social relationships be shaken." They feared that mass agitation would lead to violence. Broomfield attributes Gandhiji's ultimate success over his opponents to the fact that Gandhiji won over a large section of the *bhadralok* community. Increasing economic hardship, decline of the Moderates and the vacillation of the Extremists had thrown the 'lower-class *bhadralok*' in confusion. To them Gandhiji seemed to be a man with a new approach and principle on whom they could repose their confidence. Another source of Gandhiji's strength was that he succeeded in emerging as a truly 'national' leader. His growing authority in the Congress had an all-India basis. It has been rightly observed that "The old-style Congress, a federation of provincial grandees, was being destroyed by Gandhi's consolidation of the powers of the All-India Congress executive and his intrusions into provincial politics." Above all, Gandhiji had a unique capacity to move the masses and create unprecedented excitement and enthusiasm all over the country.

Non-Co-operation movement      The principle of Non-Co-operation was adopted by the Central Khilafat Committee. The movement was formally started on 1 August, 1920, a day also memorable for the death of Tilak. In a special session held in Calcutta the Congress adopted the resolution on Non-Co-operation moved by Gandhiji. In the resolution Gandhiji made it clear that besides the question of Khilafat, the Non-Co-operation movement was to be launched in view of the Punjab atrocities, the subsequent exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lt. Governor of the Punjab, and other guilty officers and finally, the establishment of *Swarajya* which alone could only "vindicate national honour" and "prevent repetition of similar wrongs in future." The Non-Co-operation was also "conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress." The bleeding heart of the Punjab had deeply moved Gandhiji



and was largely responsible for the change from his earlier policy of co-operation. The Government's callousness now made him declare that "Co-operation in any shape or form with this satanic government is sinful."

The Non-Co-operation programme included surrender of titles, honorary offices, resignation from nominated seats in local bodies, boycott of Government functions, withdrawal of children from Government controlled and aided institutions, establishment of national schools and boycott of British courts, legislature, etc. Great emphasis was laid on the promotion of Swadeshi, hand spinning and weaving, removal of untouchability and collections for the Swarajya fund among other items. The *Charka* (spinning wheel) and manufacture of *Khaddar* became the symbol of the resurgent national sentiment.

The Non-Co-operation movement became a mighty tidal wave sweeping through the length and breadth of the whole country and drawing into it all sections of people. It was highlighted by the renunciation of legal practice by Motilal Nehru and Chitta Ranjan Das, and resignation from the Civil Service by young Subhaschandra Bose. Among other notable participants were C. Rajagopalachari, Gopabandhu Das, the brothers Vithalbhai and Vallabhbhai Patel, J. M. Sen Gupta, Ajmal Khan, Sarojini Naidu, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and the Ali brothers. Students came out of their schools and colleges and joined the movement in thousands. The arrest of the Ali brothers only intensified the movement. People courted arrest voluntarily. Nehru gives a very amusing story that the Superintendent of the packed Lucknow prison used to tell the jailor, who was a Khan Sahib, that if he could succeed in allowing some of the Congress prisoners to escape then he would be recommended for the title of Khan Bahadur. The movement also swayed poor Sikh peasants in the Punjab to revolt against gross evils and abuses prevailing in some Sikh temples. In the South, the Muslim peasantry of Malabar known as Moplahs, rose against money-lenders and land-

lords who were mostly Hindus. But this rising unfortunately assumed a communal character and caused much innocent bloodshed.

The Non-Co-operation movement alarmed the Government. The Prince of Wales was brought to India to evoke the traditional feelings of loyalty. But the day of his arrival in India (17 November, 1921) was observed as *Hartal* in Bombay and other parts of the country. The Congress had decided to boycott the Royal visit. The visit thus failed to have the desired effect.

In its Ahmedabad Session held in December, 1921, the Congress adopted a resolution approving Non-Co-operation and urging the people to organise individual and mass Civil Disobedience. Gandhiji was appointed as "the sole Executive authority of the Congress" to launch Civil Disobedience. On 1 February, 1922, Gandhiji announced his decision to start mass Civil Disobedience in Bardoli in Surat district of the Bombay Presidency. The announcement caused great expectation and excitement. But Gandhiji suspended the proposed Civil Disobedience because of a sudden mob violence on a police station at Chauri Chaura in U.P. killing twenty-two policemen. Gandhiji's decision caused great disappointment. But the Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli a few days later approved the suspension of Non-Co-operation and Civil Disobedience. Gandhiji was arrested and tried in March, 1922, and was sentenced to six years' simple imprisonment. This did not produce the expected upheaval and thus came to end the Non-Co-operation movement. Evidently, as the Congress Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee admitted in its Report, the country was not yet prepared for a mass Civil Disobedience movement. Moreover, with the transformation of Turkey into a secular republican state under Kamal Pasha, the Khilafat movement had collapsed. This had seriously affected the Non-Co-operation movement. And with it the

glowing prospect of a Hindu-Muslim entente "dissolved like a summer 'hundercloud."

Significance  
of the Non-  
Co-operation  
movement

The Non-Co-operation movement is a landmark in the Indian struggle for independence. It was a mass movement whose message reached the remotest village. It generated a feeling of freedom and helped remove the deep-rooted feeling of frustration and helplessness. It enhanced the *morale* of the people and inspired them to challenge the old colonialist mentality. It had raised national dignity. The solid values of mass organisation, discipline and sacrifice were learnt by experience. Gandhiji had "converted the nationalist movement into a revolutionary movement." Its ultimate gain outweighed the immediate losses. The Congress had become a force to reckon with and hereafter it went on from strength to strength. The movement also had its social significance. Gandhiji's emphasis on the need to remove the evils of caste barriers and his deep concern for the welfare of the Harijans, his crusade against untouchability had made the people conscious of the social evils and accelerated the process of internal reformation. The emphasis on *khadi* and the stress on the necessity of freeing the poor people from the exploitation of landlords, moneylenders and businessmen added economic significance to the movement launched by Gandhiji. All these gave a new dimension and direction to the Indian national movement.

*Post-Non-Co-operation years : Swarajya Party :*

Swarajya  
Party  
formed

The suspension of the Non-Co-operation movement followed by Gandhiji's arrest and sentence led some Congressmen to explore other methods of continuing the national struggle. Some of them, led by Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru thought of contesting the elections to the Legislative Councils with the object of wrecking the reforms from within by "uniform, consistent and continuous obstruction."

But others in the Congress were opposed to this policy and programme as it went against the basic Congress principle of Non-Co-operation. But in reply to this it was argued that a changing situation justified a change in policy. Within the Congress there were now two schools of thought—the No-changers and the Pro-changers. Though in its annual session at Gaya (December, 1922) the Congress voted in favour of the No-changers, yet Pro-changers founded the Swarajya Party to contest the elections to the Councils and carry out its programme of wrecking the reforms from within. The danger of a formal split in the Congress was however averted and the Swarajya Party started to function as an integral part of the Congress.

New Reforms do not work well      The new constitution which had come into force in 1921, being boycotted by the Congress, was working none too well. Excepting in Madras where the Justice Party had developed into a well-organised and disciplined party, the new Act failed to achieve anything or fulfil any expectation. The Liberals, pressed between peoples' non-co-operation and the Government's unresponsive rigid policy and attitude, were in an unenviable situation. The Liberal party itself was too loosely knit and ill-financed to form stable ministries and work out constructive programmes.

Failure of the Swarajyists      The Liberals were routed by the Swarajya nominees in the elections of November, 1923. The Swarajya Party "for the first time, brought a new and aggressive element in the Councils." But within a few years the Swarajyists found it difficult to do much in the Council politics. The death of C. R. Das in 1925 not only weakened the Swarajyists but also took away one of the most outstanding national leaders.

The Swarajyists came in for much criticism in the press. They were accused of dragging the Congress "into the mire of the Councils" and of misleading the educated classes. They were criticised for neglecting the masses and unwittingly contributing to the growth of communal dissension. The Swarajya Party ultimately walked out of

the legislatures without attaining its objectives. Motilal Nehru ruefully admitted that the offer of co-operation had been "contemptuously rejected" and it was time to think of "other ways" to achieve the objective.

Communal riots : Period of depression  
 With the suspension of the Non-Co-operation movement and failure of the Swarajya Party a comparative period of depression overtook the nationalist movement. The end of the Khilafat movement followed by the suspension of Non-Co-operation had an adverse effect on Hindu-Muslim relations. Frequent deplorable communal riots began to break out since 1923. The Muslim League, which had so long been passing through a lean period, again became prominent under the leadership of M. A. Jinnah (1876—1948). A persuasive speaker and barrister, Jinnah in his youth had come into close contact with nationalist leaders like Muhammad Ali and G. K. Gokhale. In 1910 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council from the Bombay Presidency. He was active behind the signing of the Lucknow Pact of 1916. He was elected President of the Muslim League in 1920 and enjoyed that position for many years to come. Jinnah soon became an ardent supporter and exponent of the 'two-nation' theory and Pakistan. Spearheaded by Jinnah the Muslim League pressed hard separatist demands. Communal relations worsened. An All-Parties Conference and even a 21-day fast by Gandhiji failed to have the desired effect on communal relations. The British Government's policy and attitude to the demand for Self-Government remained unchanged. So the national movement seemed to have struck a bad patch.

### *Anti-Simon agitations : Reinvigorated Nationalism :*

Appointment  
 of the  
 Simon  
 Commission  
 (1927)

The drooping spirit of the national movement received a much-needed fillip from the appointment of the Simon Commission. The demand for Self-Government was growing in India. Even the Liberals were disappointed

with the Government of India Act of 1919. The British Government felt the need of a fresh review of the political situation in India. The announcement was made in November, 1927. All the seven members of the Commission being British, opposition to this exclusive foreign composition of the Commission provided a common meeting ground for all the political parties. The Commission, on its arrival in India in February, 1928, was boycotted by the Congress, the Liberals and a large section of the Muslims. Besides the question of its composition, the Congress was opposed to the Simon Commission on the ground that there could be no question of "an enquiry into our fitness for Swaraj or for any measure of responsible Government."

**Anti-Simon demonstrations** The Simon Commission met with black flag demonstrations and hostile demonstrations. In one such demonstration at Lahore Lala Lajpat Rai was seriously injured in a wanton police assault on the agitators. His death shortly afterwards was naturally attributed to this injury and intensified the people's wrath and determination. Pandit Govinda Ballabh Pant also received serious injuries from a police *lathi* charge on anti-Simon demonstrators in Lucknow from which he never completely recovered. Jawaharlal Nehru himself, being in the thick of the fray, was another victim of this humiliating treatment. Thus the whole country was once again in ferment and "an intended gesture of goodwill became a rallying cry for freedom." Pendrel Moon has aptly remarked that the all-white Simon Commission was "a first-class blunder."

**All Parties Conference : Nehru Report** A more positive aspect of the movement was an All-Parties Conference which met at Lucknow in August, 1928, to produce a draft constitution for India. This was to be an effective reply to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead's challenge to the Indian nationalists "to produce a constitution which carries behind it a fair measure of general agreement" among the Indian people. The Conference accepted a draft constitution framed by a Committee, headed by Motilal Nehru. It became famous

as the Nehru Report or the Nehru Constitution. In the Report, Dominion Status was stated to be the goal of all the "recognised parties in India." It emphasised that attainment of dominion status was not viewed as a remote stage of evolution but as "the next immediate step". In reply to the argument that social and political conditions in India were not suitable for dominion self-government the Nehru Committee wrote : "We do not deny that there is much need for social advance. Indeed, the need seems to us to be urgent and imperative. We feel, however, that that is an argument for, rather than against, the establishment of responsible government; for we believe that without real political power coming into our hands, a real programme of social reconstruction is out of the question ....." The Report of the Committee repudiated 'separate electorates' and 'weightage' and provided for security for all the Muslims by the principle of provincial autonomy. It laid stress on 'freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion', 'right of free expression of opinion', 'right to free elementary education', equal civil rights and equality of all citizens before the law, etc. A notable feature of the future Commonwealth of India would be that "There shall be no State religion for the Commonwealth of India or for any province in the Commonwealth, nor shall the State either directly or indirectly endow any religion or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status."

Demands  
of the  
Muslim  
League  
(January,  
1929)

The acceptance of the Motilal Nehru Report by the All-Parties Conference was a rare example of political foresight and wisdom on the part of the Indian political parties. Unfortunately, the accord reached in the Conference proved shortlived. A few months later the Report was rejected by the Muslim League led by Jinnah. The All-India Muslim Conference (January, 1929) adopted resolution on Muslim demands. It stated that 'separate electorates' had become the law of the land and the

Muslims could not be deprived of that right without their consent. It pleaded for a federal constitution with maximum provincial autonomy and vesting of 'residual powers' in the Provinces. The Conference demanded "weightage" and 'adequate safeguards' for the protection of Muslim interests in India. Thus once again the communal question wrecked the possibility of a united front for a common cause. The pro-Congress Nationalist Muslim Party formed by Dr. A. M. Ansari failed to achieve much. It could hardly reach the Muslim masses. The death of Ajmal Khan was also a distinct loss to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Calcutta Session of the Congress (1928) : one-year grace offered

In its annual session, held in Madras in March 1927, the Congress had declared complete Independence as its goal. In view of that the Congress acceptance of the goal of Dominion Status, as laid down by the Nehru Report, was thought to be a step backward, if not a positive climb down. The younger section of the Congress, led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhaschandra Bose, had founded the Independence for India League. The Left wing in the Congress was very unhappy with this modification of the Congress objective. There was possibility of a clash in the Calcutta Session (1928) of the Congress between the two schools of opinion. After lively discussions in the session the Congress agreed to accept Dominion Status, if it was granted by the British Government within a year. Failing that, the Congress would revert to its goal of Independence and "will organise a campaign of non-violent Non-Co-operation." It was a skilful compromise for which Gandhiji had worked.

1928 : a year of significant developments

The year 1928 witnessed remarkable developments. As Nehru writes : "Early in 1925 India was still quiescent, passive, perhaps not fully recovered from the effort of 1919-1922 ; in 1928 she seemed fresh, active, and full of suppressed energy. Everywhere there was evidence of this ; among the industrial workers, the peasantry,



middle-class youth, and the intelligentsia generally." The Trade Union movement, led by the All-India Trade Union Congress, had become powerful. Industrial disturbances took place in various parts of the country. In 1928 there were more than two hundred strikes in India. The militant Girni Kamgar Unions of the cotton textile industry in Bombay and southern Maharashtra became very powerful. A general strike, supported by the Girni Kamgar Union, took place in Bombay in March, 1929. There were numerous other strikes throughout that year. There were indications of peasants' unrest, especially in U.P. and Gujarat. The heroic struggle of the peasants of Bardoli, led by Vallabhbhai Patel against Government attempt to increase revenue earned the admiration of the whole country. The civil disobedience and no-tax campaign organised by Patel crippled the administration in the area. The leadership of this heroic struggle made him known as *Sardar*. The movement ended a few months later when the Bombay Government agreed to appoint a Committee to revise the rates. During this period, youth movement became popular and widespread. Innumerable Youth Leagues were founded and Youth Conferences enthusiastically held. Besides these, there were the anti-Simon agitations and the sitting of the All-Parties Conference. Revolutionary activities were also spreading fast. Indeed, the political situation was explosive and full of possibilities.

In 1929 the Labour Party came to power in Britain. Simon wrote a letter to the Premier, Ramsay Macdonald, suggesting a conference of the representatives of both British India and the Indian States, for reaching an agreement as wide as possible. The suggestion was accepted and on 31 October, 1929, the Viceroy Lord Irwin declared that "it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status." He also announced that a Round Table Conference would be summoned soon. Irwin

Ramsay  
Macdonald's  
announcement  
(31 October,  
1929)

wanted, in his own words, "to bring to the body politic of India the touch that carries with it healing and health." His declaration was welcomed by Indian leaders and it created a favourable reaction. Prospects of a compromise looked bright. The Congress accepted the invitation to the Round Table Conference but suggested that it should have the largest representation and that all political prisoners should be released. But the Announcement of October, 1929 produced an adverse reaction in the conservative circles in England. They argued that Irwin's declaration would only encourage the Indian nationalists to press for more unrealistic demands. On the other hand the conservative reaction made a section of Congress men, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, suspicious of British intentions. In order to remove the misunderstandings between the Congress and the Government a meeting was arranged between Viceroy Irwin and Gandhiji. In the meeting Gandhiji demanded an assurance from the Viceroy that Dominion Status was immediately forthcoming. But Irwin was unable to give such an assurance. So the Gandhi-Irwin meeting proved futile. This caused much disappointment and the Congress was set to launch another mass movement.

Gandhi-  
Irwin  
Meeting  
(December,  
1929)

### *Civil Disobedience Movement :*

Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the annual session of the Congress held in Lahore (December, 1929). After his heroic leadership of the Bardoli Peasants' movement, Vallabbhai Patel had become a national figure and many people suggested his name for the presidentship of the Lahore Congress. But Gandhiji preferred Jawaharlal who, in his opinion, represented youth and dynamism. Maulana Azad also wished to see Nehru as the Congress President, for he felt that Jawaharlal "would make a great appeal to Moslem youth." The election of Nehru also indicated the growing strength

Lahore  
Congress  
(1929)

of the Left wing in the Congress and there was great enthusiasm all-round. In Nehru's own words "this overflowing enthusiasm was for a symbol and an idea". There was "thunder in the air" and the events of 1919 were remembered with all their humiliations and glories. The one-year grace fixed by the Calcutta Congress expired. The Lahore Congress adopted the resolution on Independence and the action to be taken for achieving freedom. The Congress resolved that it was fruitless to participate in the proposed Round Table Conference and declared that the entire scheme of Nehru Committee's Report had lapsed. It further declared that the word 'Swaraj' should mean 'Complete Independence'. The Congress Resolution concluded :

'As a preliminary step towards organising a campaign for Independence, and in order to make the Congress policy as consistent as possible with the change of creed, this Congress calls upon Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement to abstain from participating directly or indirectly in future elections, and directs the present Congress members of the Legislatures and Committees to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the Nation zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress and authorizes the All-India Congress Committee, whenever it deems fit to launch upon a programme of Civil Disobedience including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary.'

The Resolution was moved by Gandhiji and everyone knew that the real decision of Civil Disobedience lay with him. Befittingly, at the stroke of midnight, on 31 December 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the tri-colour National Flag of India.

In pursuance of the Congress resolution many members resigned from legislatures. But the resolution was not unanimously implemented by all the Congress members of the legislatures. They formed the Congress Democratic Party. M. R. Jayakar was the leader of the dissident group and he assumed the role of Leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly. The 26th of January, 1930, was observed as the *Purna Swaraj* or Independence Day and all over the country the people took the pledge of independence. In the Pledge 'freedom' was described

Independence  
Day  
observed  
(26 January,  
1930)

as "the inalienable right of the Indian people," and the British Government in India was accused of depriving the people of their freedom, of exploiting the masses and of ruining India "economically, politically, culturally and spiritually." It concluded, "We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognize, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence.....We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj."

The Congress Working Committee authorised Gandhiji to start Civil Disobedience, as and when he thought it proper and suitable. As in the days of Non-Co-operation, India was in the wake of a great movement Verrier Elwin, an eye-witness of the age, writes pertinently: "At this time, the national movement of India had risen to a pitch of sincerity and devotion that has rarely been equalled in the political upheavals of the world." The nation in breathless suspense was looking forward to Gandhiji for leadership and guidance.

Dandi  
March :  
Violation  
of Salt  
Laws  
(March-  
April,  
1930)

On March 2, 1930, Gandhiji wrote his famous letter to the Viceroy communicating his decision to launch the *Satyagraha* campaign by manufacturing salt at Dandi unless the evils enumerated by him in his letter were immediately removed. The Viceroy sent a curt reply refusing to see Gandhiji and regretting that the latter should contemplate "a course of action which was clearly bound to involve violation of the law and danger to the public peace." This ended all hopes of a settlement. The historic Civil Disobedience movement was launched by Gandhiji with his famous march to Dandi, a small village on the Gujarat sea-coast, where he decided to make salt in defiance of the Salt Law regulations, more as a symbol of protest. The march began on 12 March, 1930, and Gandhiji and his followers reached Dandi, a distance

of about 200 miles from Sabarmati Ashram, on 5 April. On the morning of 6 April, 1930, Gandhiji violated the Salt Laws which signalled the beginning of countrywide waves of Civil Disobedience. Gandhiji's decision to break the Salt Laws confounded many people including some of his admirers. About his own reaction to the decision to break the Salt Tax, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote : "The Salt Tax was to be attacked, the Salt Laws were to be broken. We were bewildered and could not fit in a national struggle with common salt." But there were others who appreciated the significance of the imminent march to Dandi. Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of the *Modern Review*, pointed out that the attack on the salt monopoly was only the first stage in the campaign. Other means were held in reserve. He wrote, "The movement must not be judged by its physical proportions. It is epoch-making, path-breaking." He proved right. The march to Dandi raised public feelings to a fever heat and all eyes were focussed on its daily progress. The utmost courage, conviction and idealism of the Satyagrahis earned the admiration of the whole nation. Paying eloquent tribute to the band of patriots led by Gandhiji, Ramananda Chatterjee wrote : ".....It requires some insight and imagination, some spiritual awakening, to understand, appreciate and be impressed by the march of an old unarmed man at the head of a few dozens of unarmed followers to break the iniquitous laws of the mightiest empire in the world in order to gain freedom for his people." It is important to note that this was written by a man who by the 1930s had come to disagree with some of the policies of Gandhiji and had developed a positive dislike for the Congress stand on certain issues.

Civil  
Disobedience  
spreads

Violation of laws, non-payment of taxes, boycott of foreign goods and clothes, mass strikes and demonstrations shook the whole country. The no-tax campaign in U.P. was a salient feature of the movement. Thousands of women came out to offer Civil Disobedience in response to Gandhiji's stirring appeal. The then Home Secretary to the Government of

India confessed to Verrier Elwin that "nothing had disturbed him more than the great awakening among Indian women and the part that they had begun to play in politics." The movement meanwhile reached the Frontier Province where Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as 'the Frontier Gandhi', started an organisation of non-violent Pathan warriors, named "Khudai Khidmatgars" (Servants of God). From their uniforms they became known as the Red Shirts. Abdul Ghaffar Khan urged his warrior followers to be non-violent, disciplined and devoted to the cause of freedom. The Red Shirts became a part of the Congress organisation.

The Civil Disobedience movement soon reached a dimension that upset even the Government's anticipation. A virtual reign of terror and repression was let loose. Repressive laws, mass arrests, torture, firings, *lathi*-charges and police excesses became common occurrences. Viceroy Lord Irwin gave a warning that he would crush the Congress by using all his strength as the Congress was seeking to undermine and sap the foundation of the Government. The leaders, including Gandhiji, were arrested. But that only intensified the movement. Boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops became very widespread. The Congress Working Committee encouraged social boycott of Indians who supported the British. But the movement remained generally non-violent. The heroism of the *Satyagrahis* and the answering brutality of the police reached their climax when the former raided the salt depot of Dharsana in the Surat district.

The Simon Commission Report was published in the middle of the Civil Disobedience movement. Its recommendations were found completely unsatisfactory to the nationalists. By the end of 1930, mass arrest of Congress leaders, adverse effects of agricultural depression on the peasants, repressive ordinances and other measures succeeded in slowing down the tempo of the Civil Disobedience movement. At the same time the Government, impressed

by the spontaneity and magnitude of the movement, more keenly felt the immediate necessity of resuming deliberations for a settlement of the issues involved. Efforts were made to persuade Gandhiji to agree to participate in the proposed Round Table Conference in London. Though the negotiations failed, the British Government decided to go ahead with the Round Table Conference.

The First Round Table Conference (1930-1931)      The First Round Table Conference was held from 12 November, 1930 to 19 January, 1931. The Congress did not participate.

There were representatives of the British political parties, delegates from the Indian States, from the Liberals, the Muslim League, the Depressed Classes, the Sikhs and other groups. Among the prominent Indian participants were Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, the Right Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Sir Mohammad Shafi, Mr. Jinnah, Maulana Mohammad Ali and others. It was generally agreed in the Conference that British India and the Indian States should form a Federal Union. There were prolonged discussions on the framework of the constitution. But B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Scheduled Castes, raised the question of reserved seats for the 'Depressed Classes'. The Muslim delegates pressed for "adequate safeguards" for the Muslims. Thus, the minority problem once again proved a bogey to any workable agreement. It is important to note that the bulk of the Muslims in India did not have much sympathy for Civil Disobedience. Even Muhammad Ali, once a great admirer and associate of Gandhiji, said in 1930 : "We refuse to join Mr. Gandhi because his movement is not a movement for the complete independence of India but for making the seventy millions of Indian Mussalmans dependents of the Hindu Mahasabha." The Hindu-Muslim brotherhood of the Khilafat—Non-Co-operation days was now a far cry. Separatism had spread its tentacles far and wide.

In his closing address to the Conference the Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald, appealed to the people of

India to end Civil Disobedience and co-operate with the Government in working out a constitutional settlement. The Conference was adjourned *sine die*.

Gandhi-  
Irwin  
Pact  
(5 March,  
1931)

The British Government knew fully well that any settlement, concerning India's future, without the Congress co-operation was not a practical proposition. So efforts were made to induce the Congress to change its attitude and participate in the next session of the Round Table Conference. On the Congress side also the earlier rigidity was giving way to a more conciliatory attitude, particularly, in view of the fact that Civil Disobedience movement had thawed considerably. The Congress authorised Gandhiji to negotiate a settlement with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin. The outcome of the negotiations was the famous Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 5 March 1931. It was agreed that the Civil Disobedience movement would be discontinued and steps would be taken for Congress participation in the second session of the Round Table Conference. The Government expressed its approval of the encouragement of Indian industries "as a part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material conditions of India", and stated that it had no intention to interfere with or discourage peaceful methods for achieving this object. But the boycott on foreign goods, primarily directed against British goods, was intended "to exert pressure for political ends". As a boycott of this character would be inconsistent with Congress participation in the Round Table Conference for friendly discussions, it was agreed that "the discontinuance of the Civil Disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon....."

The Pact was approved by the Congress in its annual session held in Karachi (March, 1931). Though the execution of Bhagat Singh and two other revolutionaries connected with the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the outbreak of communal riots cast inevitably a dark shadow on the more critical and sensitive minds in the Congress session, the



Gandhi-Irwin Pact was hailed as a triumph of the Congress as it was the first occasion when the Viceroy "talked man to man to the Indian leader without pomp, reservations or unreality."

The Second  
Round Table  
Conference  
(1931)

The Second Round Table Conference met in London in September, 1931. Gandhiji attended the Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. Another notable participant was Sarojini Naidu who was invited to represent Indian womanhood. The Congress was not interested in petty details of the future constitution. It was concerned with the fundamental, i.e., granting of Dominion Status—in full and at once. In his speech on India's place in the British Empire, Gandhiji said that the Congress contemplated a partnership between the Indians and the British people as "two absolute equals". He desired to see a partnership between the two countries—"but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another." In another speech (30 November, 1931) he took strong exception to the attitude in treating the Congress as one of the several political parties in India. He emphatically said, "All the other parties at this meeting represent social interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India. all interests. It is no communal organisation ; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed ; its platform is universal....." Gandhiji's personal charm and catholicity impressed the Conference but he could not achieve any practical success. This Conference also broke down on the communal question. Its failure, at least to the Congress, was not unexpected. Still it caused depression and a sense of frustration. The national struggle continued. But, as Nehru admits, "it did create an atmosphere somewhat unfavourable to it."

Civil Dis-  
obedience  
resumed

On his return to India towards the end of the year Gandhiji was dismayed to see Government repression in full swing. All the prominent leaders had been arrested. Revolutionary

activities had intensified in Bengal, U.P. and the Frontier Provinces. Gandhiji's willingness to have an interview with the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon who proved intransigent could not materialise. The Civil Disobedience movement was resumed and Gandhiji was arrested on 4 January, 1932. The Congress was declared an illegal body and the Government took the sternest measures to crush the movement. Police action surpassed even its own past records of shame. A grim picture of police atrocities was depicted in the Report of the India League Delegation which made a thorough enquiry into the Civil Disobedience movement.

B. R. Ambedkar and the Depressed Classes      Viceroy Irwin's successor, Lord Willingdon was less liberal in his attitude to the Indian nationalist aspirations than his predecessor. The British Government, feeling that they had brought the Indian situation well under their control, was anxious to take advantage of the communal differences existing in India. Along with the Muslim separatists the Sikhs and the Depressed Classes were demanding separate electorates and weightage. The leader of the Depressed Classes or the so-called 'Untouchables' Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that a truly independent and democratic India could never be built up unless safeguards were taken against her peculiar political and socio-economic maladies and maladjustments. Fearing betrayal by the upper classes he was demanding certain preventive and remedial measures such as guaranteed minimum representation of the Untouchables in the Legislature, Executive and in the Public Services. In the Round Table Conference he demanded that the Depressed Classes should be treated as a separate community for electoral purposes. Interestingly, Dr. Ambedkar was not unaware of the ulterior motive behind the British show of sympathy for his community. Addressing the All-India Depressed Classes Congress in 1930 he had said, "I am afraid the British choose to advertise our unfortunate conditions not with the object of removing them, but only because such a

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course serves well as an excuse for retarding the political progress of India."

**The Communal Award (August, 1932)** In August 1932, Ramsay Macdonald made his 'Communal Award' providing for separate electorates for Muslim, Sikh and European voters. There was to be provision for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, officially described as Scheduled Castes, as a separate community. There was also to be reservation of seats for women. The Government issued a White Paper on the future constitution of India. It contained proposals for the creation of several Muslim majority provinces and formation of legislatures on the basis of separate electorate. Joint electorate, the symbol and basis of national unity, was abandoned.

**Gandhiji's fast : The Poona Pact** Gandhiji who had been a great crusader against untouchability strongly opposed the scheme of separate electorates for the 'Untouchables'. He undertook a fast unto death in the Yeravada prison as a protest. Five days later an agreement was reached in a Conference at Poona which considerably amended the Award on this issue. The Poona Pact, as it came to be known, was considered by many as an unfortunate shifting of emphasis from the main object of the Civil Disobedience movement. Gandhiji was now more concerned with the Harijan movement. This had an adverse effect on the Civil Disobedience movement which began to show signs of decay.

**The Hindu Mahasabha and criticism of Congress Policy** The Congress attitude to the Communal Award appeared to many Hindus as lacking in firmness. Under the auspices of the Hindu Mahasabha numerous Anti-Communal Award Conferences were held in different parts of the country. The Congress policy was criticised as appeasement of the Muslim League. Hindu communalism became a powerful force in India. It may be mentioned here that the Hindu Mahasabha was founded several years ago mainly with the object of promoting Hindu social reforms and welfare. But it gradually drift-

ed into politics and became a bitter critic of the Congress policy of "appeasement" and strongly opposed the demand for separate electorates. As mentioned earlier, the post-Non-Co-operation period was marred by strained Hindu-Muslim relations and frequent outbreak of communal riots. There had been a recurrence of such trouble in 1926 in which Swami Sradhdhananda was killed. The activities and demands of the Muslim League spearheaded by Jinnah had alarmed many Hindus who shared the Mahasabha's concern for the preservation of an undivided India, protection of Hindu interests and promotion of a sense of unity among the members of the Hindu community. The Communal Award, perpetuated by the Government of India Act of 1935, intensified communal tension and further widened the gulf between different communities.

The Third Round Table Conference met in London in November, 1932, with the Congress holding away. It was attended by a much smaller number of representatives than before. The outcome of the Round Table Conferences and subsequent discussions was the Government of India Bill which became

an Act in 1935 in spite of 'diehard' conservative opposition in Britain, led by Winston Churchill. During the debates on the Bill in the House of Commons, Winston Churchill boastfully remarked, "We have as good a right to be in India as anyone except, perhaps, the

Depressed Classes, who are the original stock. Our Government is not an irresponsible Government. It is a Government responsible to the Crown and to Parliament. It is incomparably the best Government that India has ever seen or ever will see." He argued, "We are invited to believe that worst self-government is better than the best good government. That is going too far....." Indians needed the British rule for their protection and security. For, Churchill believed, "They have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. They will diminish with our diminution and decay with our decay....."

The Third  
Round Table  
Conference

Churchill's  
criticism  
of the  
Government  
of India  
Bill

Government  
of India  
Act  
(1935)

The Government of India Act (2 August, 1935) established a 'Federation of India' and provided for provincial autonomy with a Government responsible to an elected legislature in every Governor's Province. The powers of the Secretary of State, the Government of India and the Provinces were redistributed between the Central Government and the Provinces. Departments of provincial administration were to be controlled by Ministers responsible to their legislatures. But the Governors were to "act in their discretion" before assenting to Bills and had certain "special responsibilities". Election to the legislatures was to be on the principle of the Communal Award. The Federal Legislature was to be a bicameral body. There was to be Dyarchy at the centre. Most of the departments were to be administered on the advice of the ministers, with the Governor-General holding certain "safeguards". Defence and foreign affairs were to be controlled by the Governor-General with the assistance of "Counsellors" appointed by himself. The Counsellors were to be responsible only to him. Thus, with innumerable checks, restrictions, reservations and safeguards the new Act was still far away from even a reasonable measure of Self-Government. The status of India was still that of a dependency "gradually gravitating towards that of a Dominion".

Civil Dis-  
obedience  
fades out

The new Act of 1935 was in general a disappointment for the Indian political leaders. But whereas others were willing to give it a fair trial, the Congress condemned it as totally disappointing. The Congress attitude was easily understandable in the light of its known standpoint. It was pledged to non-co-operate with anything short of Dominion Status. But from a practical analysis of the political atmosphere and the state of the Civil Disobedience movement the Congress found itself in a none-too-happy situation. The Civil Disobedience was still being continued but it had lost its earlier fire, appeal and enthusiasm. As Nehru describes

it, "the initial push of inspiration was far less than in 1930. It was as if we entered unwillingly to battle. There was a glory about it in 1930 which had faded a little two years later." Moreover, the mainspring of the movement Gandhiji, now very much preoccupied with the Harijan problem, favoured suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement. Thus gradually, in spite of occasional sparks and flashes, the movement slowly petered out before it was officially called off by Gandhiji in May, 1933. The disappointment caused in many quarters was understandable and among those who became critical of Gandhiji's policy and leadership was Subhaschandra Bose, then a prominent leader of the Congress Left wing. The Civil Disobedience movement was, however, memorable for the part played by the women, the youth, the students and the masses. The rural masses, affected by industrial and agricultural slump, had turned to the Civil Disobedience movement. To them it was a struggle against an oppressive land system. This mass participation lent the Congress a new status and prestige. The Congress hold on the masses was proved beyond doubt. The flames of the movement died down but the "burning embers" remained "for a long time hot and unquenchable as India's will to freedom"

### *Revolutionary Activities :*

The Government policy of repression had largely succeeded in curbing revolutionary activities. Moreover, with the beginning of the Non-Co-operation movement the attention of all nationalists was focussed on the progress of this mighty upsurge. But the suspension of Non-Co-operation was marked by the revival of revolutionary activities. Newspapers, journals and leaflets extolling revolutionary activities began to appear. The *Anushilan* and the *Yugantar* group again became active. A conference of revolutionaries was held in Lucknow in October, 1924, and its outcome was an all-

India organisation named Hindusthan Republican Association. Its object was "to establish a federated Republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution." One of the most daring acts of this group led by Ramprasad Bismil was a dacoity in a railway train proceeding from Kakori towards Alamnagar, on 9 August, 1925. The police succeeded in discovering the plot and arresting the suspects and a case was instituted which became famous as the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Some of the leaders received death sentences, others long terms of imprisonment. There was much popular discontent against the capital punishment but all efforts to save their lives failed. The principal accused Ramprasad, Roshanlal and Ashfaqulla bravely mounted the gallows expressing their last minute wishes for the overthrow of the British rule in India.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 Communist ideas began to influence a small section of nationalists in India. Among Indians in Europe who were attracted by the Communist ideology were M. N. Roy, Abani Mukhopadhyay and Nalini Gupta. Attempts were made by M. N. Roy and others to organise a Communist Party in India. But some people sent by Roy for this purpose were arrested as soon as they reached the Indian borders and they were tried in what became known as the Peshwar Conspiracy Case (1922). The Government also kept a close watch on Communists within the country. A number of pioneers of Marxism in India including Muzaffar Ahmed and S. A. Dange were arrested, tried and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case (1924). The next year, in 1925, in a conference in Cawnpur a Central Committee of the Communist Party of India was formed. The Committee used to meet secretly. During 1926-1928 there was growing industrial unrest in the country. Several Trade Unions were formed and socialistic tendencies became increasingly evident. In 1927

the Communists founded the Workers' and Peasants' Party and began to participate actively in workers' and peasants' movements. The inaugural conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party was held in Meerut (October, 1928).

**Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929-1933)** The increasing revolutionary activities and growing industrial unrest alarmed the Government and in September, 1928, a Public Safety Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly. In March, 1929, in the wake of a country-wide industrial unrest, the Government arrested thirty-one Leftists, including three Englishmen, on a charge of conspiracy against the British Crown. Among those arrested were Muzaffar Ahmed, Dange, Mirajkar and P. C. Joshi and two British Communists—Ben Bradley and Philip Spratt. The arrested persons were put in Meerut jail and the trial instituted, became known as the Meerut Conspiracy Case. The trial continued for four years and most of the accused received long-term sentences. The Meerut Conspiracy Case greatly helped in drawing the people's minds to the fascinating but then little-understood doctrines of socialism or communism. The Communist Party of India was reorganised in 1933 and in 1934 the Party was officially banned by the Government.

**Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Datta : Assembly Bomb Throwing Case (1929)** After the Kakori Conspiracy Case, the police had taken the sternest possible measures to round up all revolutionaries and their associates. These had a dampening effect on revolutionary activities. Chandra Sekhar Azad, an absconder of the Kakori Conspiracy Case, now took the initiative in reorganising the revolutionaries. The Hindusthan Republican Association was renamed as the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association which signified its object of creating a socialist State in India. Their activities were now sought to be linked up with the prevailing labour unrest in the big cities and the influence of the Russian Revolution was more clearly evident. Saunders, a police officer of Lahore, was shot dead on 17 November, 1928, by Bhagat Singh.



On 8 April, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Datta, both members of the Association, threw two bombs on the floor of the Legislative Assembly at Delhi from the public gallery, while the Public Safety Bill was being discussed. Both of them made no attempt to escape as they wanted to draw public attention to the aims and objectives of the revolutionaries and did not want innocents to suffer for their action. In a joint statement they explained that the bombs were dropped on the Assembly floor "to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was 'to make the deaf hear' and give the heedless a timely warning."

Shortly after the bomb-throwing incident the police discovered a bomb factory at Lahore and another at Saharanpore. Many members of the Association were arrested and the famous Lahore Conspiracy Case (1929) was instituted against the revolutionaries in 1929. Bhagat Singh was an accused in this case also. In course of the trial, under-trial prisoners started a hunger strike to protest against the treatment received in jail. They also claimed to be treated as war-prisoners and not as ordinary criminals because they were charged with waging war against the King. The fast created great public excitement. Ultimately, all the prisoners gave up the fast excepting Jatin Das who stood firm in his principle to the last and died after 64 days' fast on 13 September, 1929. Jatin Das who, when visited by Nehru in the jail looked "soft and gentle like a young girl" had moved the people to the very depth of their hearts and had set a unique example of resolution and determination. The Lahore Conspiracy Case ended in the death sentence of Bhagat Singh and two others and long-term imprisonment for many of the accused. The martyrdom of Jatin Das gave an impetus to the Youth movement. Youth and student organisations were founded in different parts of the country. The Government also promised to revise prison regulations regarding political

prisoners though, in reality, little improvement was made.

Karachi  
Session  
of the  
Congress  
(1931)  
and the  
execution  
of Bhagat  
Singh

The execution of Bhagat Singh caused much anger and dismay. In Congress circles Gandhiji's failure to save the life of Bhagat Singh caused indignation and resentment. The annual session of the Congress was held at Karachi on 29 March, 1931, six days after the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. Patlabhi Sitaramayya writes that at that time "Bhagat Singh's name was as widely known all over India and was as popular as Gandhiji's". Vallabhbhai Patel presided over the Karachi Congress. A resolution was moved at the Congress praising the courage and self-sacrifice of Bhagat Singh and his associates. But as the Congress disapproved of violence and revolutionary methods Gandhiji accepted it only after a preamble had been added to the resolution. The amended resolution read : "The Congress, *while dissociating itself from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form, places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of.....*" The young volunteers of the Congress, supported by Subhaschandra Bose, strongly opposed the amendment but lost by a narrow margin. The heated controversy on the resolution indicated a growing ideological rift in the Congress itself.

Chandra  
Sekhar  
Azad

Revolutionary activities in northern India decreased with the arrest and conviction of the leaders of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association. But a handful of revolutionaries led by Chandra Sekhar Azad continued their activities which caused the Government much alarm and headache. Ultimately, Chandra Sekhar was killed in a skirmish with the police at Allahabad in 1931. With his death the most eventful years of revolutionary activities in northern India practically came to an end though sporadic incidents took place for the next few years in U.P., the Punjab, Delhi, Bombay, Madras and other places.

Chittagong  
Armoury  
Raid  
(18 April,  
1930)

When the daring exploits of the revolutionaries set all northern India agog, there was also a boisterous revival of similar activities in Bengal. The most spectacular and daring was the raid on the Government armouries at Chittagong led by Surya Sen, popularly known as Master-da. The raid on the Armoury was the part of a comprehensive plan of simultaneous attacks on the armouries in East Bengal. Among the associates of Surya Sen, a veteran revolutionary, were Ambika Chakravarty, Loknath Baul, Ganesh Ghosh and courageous and spirited young girls like Pritilata Waddedar and Kalpana Joshi. Surya Sen issued a Manifesto in the name of the Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, in which an appeal was made to the Indian people to support the revolutionaries in their effort to put an end to British rule in India. On the night of 18 April, 1930, the Police Armoury in Chittagong was raided but in their hurry, the raiders forgot to take the cartridges kept in a separate locked room. This rendered useless, the rifles and the Lewis guns seized by them. A few days later, in an encounter with a British force some of the revolutionaries courted death and a few escaped to continue guerilla warfare. The casualty on the British side was quite considerable. The news of the Chittagong Armoury Raid had great influence on young revolutionaries and terrorist activities intensified in various parts of the country in spite of stringent measures taken by the Government.

Binay-  
Badal-  
Dinesh

In August, 1930, Binay Bose, a student of the Dacca Mitford Hospital School, killed Lowman, Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, and escaped. A few months later, on 8 December, 1930, Binay, along with his two friends Badal and Dinesh entered the Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, and shot down Simpson, Inspector-General of Prisons, in his office. Then they went down the corridor shooting indiscriminately at European officials, one of whom was injured in the firing. Knowing that escape was impossible Badal took cyanide and died immediately. Binay and Dinesh shot themselves. The

former died a few days afterwards, but the latter recovered. He was tried and hanged.

**Sporadic revolutionary activities** The Chittagong Armoury Raid Case ended in 1932 and fourteen of the accused received transportation for life. But Surya Sen and four of his associates who had avoided arrest continued their activities. On 22 September, 1932, a group of revolutionaries led by a young girl Pritilata Waddedar raided the Railway Institute at Pahartali in Chittagong. During the raid Pritilata was seriously injured and she committed suicide to evade arrest. Surya Sen was arrested in February, 1933, through an act of treachery and was hanged after trial. In the thirties, sporadic revolutionary activities continued in Bengal, U.P., the Punjab, Delhi, Bombay, Central Provinces, Rajputana, Madras and other places. A number of police officers and some other officials were killed or wounded in these incidents. A notable incident was the attempt on the life of the Governor of Bengal, Sir Stanley Jackson, by Bina Das, a brilliant student of the University, while the former was addressing the Convocation of the University of Calcutta (1932). The attempt failed and Bina Das was sentenced to life imprisonment. However, by 1932-33 terrorist or revolutionary activities in India generally began to subside. There was a revival of such activities to some extent during the Second World War when the Indian freedom movement reached its penultimate stage.

**Object of the Revolutionaries** The revolutionaries did not believe in the principle of non-violence. Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Datta in their joint statement said: "Elimination of force at all costs is utopian and the new movement which had arisen in the country and of which we have given a warning is inspired by the ideals which guided Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kamal Pasha and Riza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi, Lafayette and Lenin." The revolutionaries' object was to overthrow the British rule and set up a republican government in India based on socialistic principles. Their objectives and plan of opera-

tion differed fundamentally from the general trend of the national movement led by the Congress. Gandhiji and most of his associates believed in non-violence. Terrorism or revolutionary activities did not receive their approval or sympathy. But there were a few within the Congress, like Subhaschandra Bose, who felt that an armed rising against the Government would be ineffective as the fight would be an unequal one. But they expected that the revolutionaries would weaken the imperialist rule in India and thus contribute effectively to the freedom movement. But there was no real co-ordination or understanding between these Congress leaders and the terrorists. Moreover, there was no central revolutionary organisation. The failure of revolutionary activities has also been attributed to the fact that most of these idealistic youngmen, coming from urban schools and colleges, failed to develop any radical agrarian programme. Only in U.P., some efforts were made in this direction. But the patriotism, devotion and sacrifice of the revolutionaries earned the admiration of the nation.

The constitutional reforms introduced by the Government of India Act of 1935, as Dr. R. C. Majumdar rightly observes, "took away the edge of both the violent and non-violent methods of Indian politics." It was not till the Quit India Movement that there was recrudescence of revolutionary activities in India.

## THE FINAL STRIDES TO FREEDOM

### *The Congress Ministries :*

The Congress and the Act of 1935      With the fading-out of the Civil Disobedience movement and its ultimate calling-off, many Congressmen began to consider the practicability of working along the lines of the now-defunct Swarajya Party. Accordingly, the Congress decided to contest the coming elections to be held under the new Act of 1935. Jawaharlal Nehru considered the new Act "a new charter of slavery." He was in favour of contesting the elections but not of taking part in any Provincial Government. This proved to be an impractical proposition. It was decided with the consent of Gandhiji that the Congress would fight the elections on the issue of repealing all repressive laws and rejection of the new Act in favour of the National Demands raised by Gandhiji in the Round Table Conference. A Parliamentary Board was set up by the Congress to deal with matters concerning the elections.

Growth of Congress Left wing      A salient feature of the Congress during the last few years was the steady growth of the Congress Left wing led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhaschandra Bose. The former did not always agree with Gandhiji and at times was seriously critical of the latter's statements and policies. Nevertheless, Jawaharlal Nehru remained loyal through a sense of personal attachment to the magic personality of Gandhiji. But Subhas Bose was more aggressive and outspoken in his

views. He soon began to lose his faith in Gandhian leadership and chalked out a different line of action for the attainment of the common goal of freedom. In 1934 Acharya Narendra Dev and Jai Prakash Narayan formed the Congress Socialist Party. Its object was to press for the adoption of socialist principles by the Congress. Congress socialist groups emerged in Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Congress socialists began to organise Kisan Sabhas and actively participate in peasants' movements that were taking place in different parts of the country. The Congress also became active in the Trade Union movement which was dominated by the Communists. During this period was formed the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, led by V. V. Giri, and the National Trade Union Federation.

Congress  
foreign  
policy

The Congress was also beginning to take active interest in world affairs. It had a long tradition of opposition to imperialism. In February, 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru attended the Congress of Oppressed Nationalists at Brussels as a representative of the Indian National Congress. He was elected a member of the Executive Council of the League Against Imperialism that was founded at the Brussels Congress. In its Madras Session (1927), the Indian National Congress expressed its strong disapproval of any aggressive action of the British Government for the protection or expansion of imperialist interests. In the following years the Congress expressed its support for the anti-fascist struggles in Spain, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia and other places. In 1937 the Congress condemned Japanese aggression in China and the next year a medical mission was sent to China which included Dr. M. Atal and Dr. Kotnis. The chief formulator of Congress foreign policy was Jawaharlal Nehru.

Lucknow  
Congress  
(1936)

In 1936 Nehru presided over the annual Congress session held at Lucknow (Faizpur). The session atmosphere was "surcharged with socialist slogans, emphasising the rights of workers and

peasants on the one hand and declaiming against the forces of Imperialism and Fascism on the other." In his Presidential address Jawaharlal said :

"The real problem for us is, how in our struggle for independence we can join together all the anti-imperialist forces in the country, how we can make a broad front of our mass elements with the great majority of the middle classes which stands for independence.....I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense....."

How does socialism fit in with the present ideology of the Congress ? I do not think it does. I believe in the rapid industrialization of the country and only thus I think will the standards of the people rise substantially and poverty be combatted. Yet I have co-operated wholeheartedly in the past with the Khadi programme and I hope to do so in the future because I believe that Khadi and village industries have a definite place in our present economy. They have a social, a political and an economic value which is difficult to measure but which is apparent enough to those who have studied their effects. But I look upon them more as temporary expedients of a transition stage rather than as solutions of our vital problems.....But though I co-operate in the village industries programme my ideological approach to it differs considerably from that of many others in the Congress who are opposed to industrialization and socialism."

The Lucknow session was a landmark in the evolution of socialistic ideas and programmes of the Congress.

The Congress and the election of 1937      Notwithstanding the fervour for socialism the Congress could not ignore the reality of political situation in the country and Jawaharlal had to admit that there was "no choice but to contest the election to the new provincial legislature." He added, "one of the principal reasons for our seeking election will be to carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and to the scores of millions of the disfranchised, to acquaint them with our future programme and policy." Jawaharlal, however, made it clear that he was not keen on Congress forming ministries, for, he explained, "Office will not add to our real strength, it will only weaken us by making us responsible for many things that we utterly dislike." But in the election held in 1937, the Congress swept the polls so far as General or predominantly Hindu seats were concerned. Congress ministries were formed in seven out of the eleven provinces. On 18 March, 1937,



the All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution on Congress policy in the legislatures. It claimed that the Congress contested the elections "with its objective of independence and its total rejection of the new Constitution, and the demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame India's constitution. The declared Congress policy was to combat the New Act and end it." Now that the Congress stand has been endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the voters, the Government should withdraw the New Constitution. In the event of its demand being turned down by the British Government, the Congress members of the legislatures should work inside and outside the legislatures for putting an end to the New Constitution. This would inevitably lead to "deadlocks with the British Government and bring out still further the inherent antagonism between British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism, and expose the autocratic and undemocratic nature of the New Constitution." The A.I.C.C., however, permitted the acceptance of office in the provinces where the Congress had a majority in the legislature and was satisfied that the Governor would not use his "special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to constitutional activities."

Congress  
rejects  
Muslim  
League  
offer of  
Coalition  
Ministry

The Muslim League had obtained a large number of seats reserved for the Muslims. The Muslim League's offer to form coalition ministries in the provinces was turned down by the Congress as it did not want to admit any one in the ministry who would not fully subscribe to Congress objectives and policies. The Congress rejection, however idealistic it might be, widened the gulf between the two parties. This was utilised to fan the smouldering embers of communalism. Jinnah publicly proclaimed that the Congress had done nothing for the Muslims. Addressing the Lucknow Session of the Muslim League (October, 1937) he said, "The present leadership of the Congress, especially during the last ten years, has been responsible for alienating the Musalmāns

of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu, and since they have formed the Governments in six provinces where they are in a majority they have by their words, deeds and programme shown more and more that the Musalmans cannot expect any justice or fair-play at their hands." Jawaharlal Nehru's reference to the Muslim League merely as "an important communal organisation" and his rather curt letter to Jinnah (6 April, 1938) turning down the latter's offer of coalition on certain terms and conditions infuriated the Muslim League. "From the classes" Jinnah now "went to the masses with the cry of Islam in danger". He accused the Congress of killing "every hope of Hindu-Muslim settlement in the right Royal fashion of Fascism", and blamed Gandhiji for destroying the ideal with which the Congress was started. Jinnah said, "He is the one man responsible for turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism. His ideal is to revive Hindu religion and establish Hindu raj in the country, and he is utilising the Congress to further his object." The Muslim League continued to press the claim that the Muslim League and the Congress were the organisations of the Muslims and Hindus respectively.

Signs of  
discord :  
Haripura  
(1938) and  
Tripuri  
Congress  
(1939)

The Congress ministries proved successful and popular. Their programmes of primary education, prohibition, rural reconstruction, uplift of the Harijans, etc., achieved considerable success. It also helped the Congress to come into wider contact with the masses which added indeed, to its power and popularity. But the achievements were not ends in themselves. The whole country showed signs of peasants' movement, industrial unrest and general discontent. The more radical trend in the Congress was reflected in the election of Subhas Bose as the President of the Haripura Congress in 1938. Clouds of the impending Second World War were now looming large. The younger people in the Congress were restive, being unhappy with the leadership and achievements of the party. Though Gandhiji had ceased to be even a

primary member of the Congress since 1934, everyone knew that it was he who was the guiding spirit and influence behind the organisation. Subhas Bose differed fundamentally from Gandhiji on vital issues such as industrialisation, and India's attitude towards the British Government during the coming world war. The Haripura Congress adopted a resolution which firmly expressed the Congress disapproval of war preparations. It asserted that India could not be a party to an imperialist war and she would not permit her man-power and resources to be exploited in the interests of British imperialism. Gandhiji did not view with favour the Congress attitude of uncompromising opposition to the British Government. He also did not agree with the draft plan of industrialisation and national development prepared by the National Planning Committee of the Congress on the initiative of Subhaschandra. Moreover, since September, 1938, the latter began to stress that the Indian struggle for independence should synchronise with the imminent war in Europe. This also incurred the displeasure of Gandhiji who did not appreciate the adoption of such a course of action by the nationalists. Thus, a rift between Gandhiji and Subhas became apparent. The next session of the Congress was to be held at Tripuri in March, 1939. Gandhiji lent his support to the candidature of Pattabhi Sitaramayya as the President of the Tripuri session. But Subhaschandra Bose defeated Sitaramayya by a wide margin of votes in an exciting contest for the presidency of the Congress. Gandhiji issued a statement describing Sitaramayya's defeat as his own defeat which caused much consternation in the country and rallied a large section of the leading Congressmen against the President.

The Tripuri Congress adopted resolutions reiterating the goal of independence and the rejection of the Federal part of the Act of 1935. It demanded "a constitution for a Free India through a Constituent Assembly, elected by the people on the basis of the adult franchise and without any interference by a foreign authority." The Congress

condemned the imperialist British foreign policy as well as Fascism in clear terms.

Forward  
Bloc  
founded  
by Bose

Gandhiji's leadership and advice were still considered essential for the Congress and the national movement. A break away from Gandhian policy and programme was impossible, if not unthinkable, for the Congress. The "Gandhi Wing", as Subhaschandra calls the pro-Gandhi group in his *The Indian Struggle*, made it impossible for the President to function effectively. The result was a complete deadlock in the organisation. The "Gandhi Wing" was very well-organised. But the "Left Wing" was not so well-organised. Moreover, even the Congress Socialist Party began to vacillate when the fight began between the two rival groups. This situation made Subhas realise that "in the absence of an organised and disciplined Left Wing, it was impossible.....to fight the Gandhi Wing." Thus Subhaschandra felt that the primary political need was "an organised and disciplined Left Wing Party in the Congress." So he resigned from the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress and founded the Forward Bloc (1939). It was intended to be "a radical and progressive party within the Congress, with a view to rallying the entire Left Wing under one banner." But the differences were so deep-rooted and fundamental that very soon the Forward Bloc became a separate independent party.

*Spread of the National movement in the Princely States :*

A significant new development during the 1930s was the spread of the national movement in the Indian Princely States or the 'Native States'. The princes enjoyed almost autocratic power in their respective States so long they remained submissive to the British Government. The British rule virtually protected the princes against any internal trouble or popular movement. A growing popular unrest in the States found reflection in the *Praja Mandal* or States' Peoples' Conference that were formed in various

States. There was a State Congress in Mysore. The Non-Co-operation movement left a deep impact on the people living in the 'Native States' and made them more conscious of the necessity of starting democratic movements for the redress of grievances and improvement of living conditions in the States. Though the Nagpur Congress (1920) urged on the rulers of the 'Native States' to introduce responsible government in their States, the Indian National Congress continued to hold for some more years to come that it should not involve itself in the internal affairs of the States. Political activities in the States should be left to the *Praja Mandal* or States' Peoples' Conference.

Gradually, agitations in the States began to spread and the people pressed for liberalisation of the administration. The appointment of the Harcourt Butler Indian States Committee (1927) and its recommendations for the establishment of better relationship between the States and the Central Government prompted some of the notable leaders of the States' people to convene an All-India States' Peoples' Conference in December, 1927. It underlined the problems of the people living in the Princely States, demanded reforms in the administration and acceptance of the principle of representation and self-government. The All-India States' Peoples' Conference rapidly emerged as a powerful political organisation. Another important development was the general awakening and the new spirit of cohesion among the people of the Princely States. The Congress lent its support to the struggle of the States' people. The feeling began to grow that the 'Native States' could not live apart from the rest of India. Presiding over the third session of the Indian States' People Conference at Bombay (June 1931), Ramananda Chatterjee said, "The division of India into British India and Indian India is political and administrative, not a geographical division, nor a natural division in any other sense. For India is one." The struggle of the States' people, he predicted, was sure to succeed, sooner or later, despite the Princes' dependence on the British for the maintenance of their autocratic power.

In 1937, there was widespread unrest in Mysore against the State Government's policy of repression. The Congress expressed its sympathy for the movement. In 1938, the Congress made it clear that Independence must be for the whole of India, including the Princely States. Agitations in the States spread rapidly and some of the rulers had to concede certain demands of their people. Individual Congressmen carried out and promoted Civil Disobedience in some of the States. In 1939, Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the 'All-India States' Peoples' Conference. State Congress organisations were set up though they were not directly under the National Congress. Such agitations led to at least some liberalisation of the administration in the States. But more important was the general awakening and the new spirit of unity among the people of the Princely States.

#### *National Movement and the Second World War :*

The Congress attitude to the Second World War

When the Second World War broke out, the Congress attitude was one of sympathy for the British though the Congress refused co-operation. Both Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru were in favour of supporting the British Government, for it seemed to be a question of struggle between Fascism and Democracy. Gandhiji wrote in the *Harijan* that his "sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint." The Congress policy was that no co-operation was possible unless the British Government made clear their war aims "in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged." The Congress demanded that "India must be declared an independent nation, and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent." Subhas Bose was opposed to co-operation with the British Government as he believed that "only after the defeat and break-up of the British Empire could India hope to be free." To him the British Empire in peril offered a real

rare opportunity to the Indians to achieve freedom.

Congress  
plea for a  
National  
Government

The British Government did not make any candid declaration on its policy and the future of India as demanded by the Congress. Consequently, all the Congress ministries resigned by the end of 1939 according to Congress directive. In its annual session held at Ramgarh in March, 1940, the Congress reaffirmed its demand for complete independence. But with the alarming runaway victories of the Germans, the Congress modified its earlier demand and offered to co-operate with the Government, if only a Provisional National Government was set up at the centre. This offer was made at the instance of C. Rajagopalachari. Gandhiji was willing to offer co-operation and wrote : "We do not seek independence out of Britain's ruin." Jawaharlal Nehru said "India is completely opposed to the idea of the triumph of Nazism." The Government's reply to the

The  
"August  
Offer"  
(8 August,  
1940)

Congress offer of co-operation came in the form of a statement by the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow on 8 August, 1940. The proposal to set up a Provisional National Government was turned down as the British Government "could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government." The Viceroy offered to set up, after the war, a representative body to devise a new constitution for India, to enlarge the Viceroy's Executive Council with additional Indian members and to appoint a War Advisory Council with representatives of British India and the Indian States. But Lord Linlithgow clearly asserted that "a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved"

This "August Offer", as it came to be known, was

totally unacceptable to the Congress. The Government attitude to the minority problem particularly offended the Congress. Nehru wrote: "It is the old language of imperialism and the content has changed in no way." In October, 1940, the Congress started an individual civil disobedience campaign. One of the first to offer individual *Satyagraha* was Acharya Vinoba Bhave, specially selected by Gandhiji.

The deadlock continued for a long time. Then the course of the war took a turn for the worse with Japan joining the Axis camp in December, 1941. The fall of Singapore and Malaya and the rapid advance of the Japanese forces in Burma posed a serious threat to the security of India. The Congress again expressed its willingness to co-operate with the British Government on condition that India be granted full independence. "The country wanted freedom before victory, the Government victory before freedom" is a terse comment on the situation.

The Muslim attitude When the World War broke out the Muslim League, while sympathising with the British, refused to offer its support unless it was recognised as the only representative organisation of the Muslims. It also asked for an assurance that no constitution be framed without the consent and approval of the League. In the early years of the war, the League remained firm in its attitude of non-co-operation with the Government. The August Offer, though not completely satisfactory to the League, allayed their fears of a Congress Raj in India. The League proclaimed that partition of India was the only solution. It was ready to offer co-operation on the acceptance of the 'two-nation' theory. The gulf between the League and the Congress had widened beyond any possibility of rapprochement.

Origin of the idea of Pakistan For quite some time a section of the Muslim intelligentsia was nourishing the idea of a separate independent Muslim State in India. It was first voiced by Mohammad Iqbal (1876—1938), the well-known poet, in 1930, when he said,



"Muslims demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India." The idea of a separate Muslim State in a new form, was elaborated by a group of young Muslim students in England at the time of the Round Table Conference. One of them, Rahmat Ali, conveyed to the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference the scheme of a separate Muslim homeland consisting of the Punjab, North-West Frontier or Afghan Province, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan. The proposed separate Muslim State was to be named PAKISTAN (Sacred land).<sup>\*</sup> The name was derived by taking the first letter of the first four provinces and the end of the last named province. The idea did not even receive a serious consideration from the delegates to the Round Table Conference. But Rahmat Ali founded the Pakistan National Movement in 1933 to propagate the idea. The effort received little attention at that time. Even the Muslim leaders dismissed it as "only a students' scheme" and as "chimerical and impracticable."

Muslim  
League  
takes up  
the cause  
of Pakistan :  
Lahore  
Session  
of the  
League  
(1940)

But the scheme of a separate Muslim State continued to live and gain ground. This was facilitated by the growing differences between the Muslim League and the Congress. Finally, Jinnah came to sponsor the 'two-nation' theory and took up the cause in right earnest. When the Congress ministries resigned he was overwhelmed with joy and he appealed to the Muslims all over India to observe 22 December, 1939, as "the 'Day of Deliverance' and thanksgiving as a mark of relief that the Congress regime has at last ceased to function."

In March, 1940, the Muslim League declared that the Muslims in India must have a separate independent State. In his presidential address at the Lahore session of the Muslim League (March 1940), Jinnah declared, "If the British Government are really in earnest and sincere to secure peace and happiness of the people of the sub-con-

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<sup>\*</sup>Originally Pakstan.

continent, the only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into "autonomous national States." The Muslim League adopted a resolution in this session reiterating its total rejection of the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935. It demanded that the areas in which the Muslims had numerical majority "should be grouped to constitute 'independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign." In Muslim minority areas "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards" should be provided for the protection of the religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests of the Muslims.

The Muslim League by and large succeeded in creating an apprehension among the Muslims of the so-called dangers of a Congress Government at the Centre and made the Muslim public opinion veer round it. No amount of Congress appeals and policy statements could allay their deep-rooted fear and distrust of a Hindu-dominated Congress rule. The League, it was now evident, would not be satisfied with anything but the formation of Pakistan as a State of which "Ahmad was the philosopher, Iqbal the prophet and Jinnah the statesman-creator."

During the period of negotiations for Indian co-operation the Muslim League remained firm in its demand for Pakistan. This provided the British Government with a good ground to turn down the Congress proposal of a Provisional National Government. But the fall of Rangoon on 8 March 1942, necessitated another effort to reach an agreement. The British Government decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British Cabinet, to India to survey the situation and find out a solution after consultations with the Indian leaders.

After a week of hectic activities and prolonged discussions, Cripps announced his proposals in the form of a *Draft Declaration* (30 March, 1942). The aim of the British Government was declared as "the earliest possible realisation of self-govern-

Cripps' Declaration  
(March, 1942)

ment in India." India was promised Dominion Status with the power to secede from the British Commonwealth. A constitution-making body was to be set up immediately after the war was over. The Declaration implicitly suggested a partition of India in the long run in case the new constitution was found unacceptable by any Province or Provinces. The Declaration also invited "the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations."

The Congress and the League reject Cripps' proposals      The Cripps' proposals were rejected by both the League and the Congress. The Congress Working Committee in its meeting (11 April, 1942), reiterated the Congress demand for freedom of India before the people could effectively participate in the defence of the country on a national basis. The Congress would not be satisfied with mere promises for the future. The Working Committee expressed its disapproval of the proposed composition of the constitution-making body and the right of the Rulers of the Indian States to decide the future of millions of people living in these States. The Declaration was criticised for its "acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a Province," which was "a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity." Gandhiji is said to have described the Cripps' Declaration as "a post-dated cheque on a failing bank."

The Muslim League, while welcoming the implicit recognition of the possibility of Pakistan, rejected the Cripps' Declaration because it had given greatest importance and priority to the creation of one Indian Union. The League reaffirmed its conviction that "the only solution of India's constitutional problem is the Partition of India into independent zones....."

Nehru's letter to President Roosevelt      Negotiations for an interim agreement failed. It was widely known that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a hand behind the decision to send the Cripps' mission. But even

the good offices of Col. Louis Johnson, the personal representative of the U.S. President, was of no avail. In a personal letter to President Roosevelt, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote on 12 April, 1942 : "The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to bring about a settlement between the British Government and the Indian people must have distressed you, as it has distressed us. As you know, we have struggled for long years for the independence of India, but the peril of today made us desire above everything else that an opportunity should be given to us to organise a real national and popular resistance to the aggressor and invader. We were convinced that the right way to do this would have been to give freedom and independence to our people and ask them to defend it. That would have lighted a spark in millions of hearts, which would have developed into a blazing fire of resistance which no aggressor could have faced successfully.....Unfortunately even that (formation of a truly national Government) was not considered feasible or desirable by the British Government. Our sympathies, as we have often declared, are with the forces fighting against fascism and for democracy and freedom ; with freedom in our own country, those sympathies could have been translated into dynamic action." It is no wonder that the Conservative Cabinet of Winston Churchill found it difficult to accept or appreciate the Congress viewpoint.

### *Quit India Movement :*

With the failure of the Cripps' mission hopes of a Congress-British Government understanding and co-operation disappeared. The Congress still adhered to its policy of resistance to any possible Japanese aggression in India. Gandhiji now contemplated an all-out campaign to compel British withdrawal from India. His view was that "the presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India Their withdrawal removes the bait." Gandhiji wrote, "Leave India in God's hands, or in modern

parlance, to anarchy. Then all parties will fight one another like dogs or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement." Most of the Congress leaders, in spite of their initial doubts, agreed to Gandhiji's new policy and plan of campaign. Only Rajagopalachari, who was in favour of the Cripps' plan and the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan, strongly opposed Gandhiji's new policy. Immediate British withdrawal, Rajagopalachari feared, would leave India to the mercy of Japanese aggression. With a few followers he resigned from the Congress.

On July 14, 1942, the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution demanding immediate end of the British rule in India. This became famous as the 'Quit India' Resolution. The immediate end of British rule in India was necessary, the resolution said, "not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, Fascism, Militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over other." The resolution proposed to set up a Provisional Government and to convene a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for India after the withdrawal of the British. It also made clear that the Congress had no desire to embarrass Great Britain or the Allies and had no sympathy for the aggressive designs of the Axis group. The Congress was even "agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression." In case of the demand being rejected by the British Government, the Congress would be "reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi."

The British Government viewed any such idea and plan of campaign as rebellion. Naturally, the Viceroy

took a very grim view of the 'Quit India' resolution. He refused to even discuss the issue with the Congress. The A.I.C.C. met on 7 August, 1942, and the next day, after prolonged discussions, passed a resolution deciding to launch a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale. The Committee requested Gandhiji to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken. The Congress made a passionate appeal to all Indian nationalists to join the movement for the independence of their motherland. Gandhiji in his address proclaimed, "I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom.....We shall do or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt."

Arrest of  
leaders and  
beginning  
of the  
movement

The iron hand of the government came down very swiftly. On the morning of 9 August, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested. The Congress was declared illegal. The news of the leaders' arrest marked the beginning of a widespread movement in India. It was hardly possible for such a movement to remain peaceful. Even Gandhiji himself was well aware of that. But the arrest of all the notable Congress leaders virtually left the movement in the hands of the masses. Naturally, the movement took the form of a violent outbreak. This included cutting of telegraph and telephone wires, damaging railway lines, raising barricades in cities and towns and other forms of violent demonstrations. The students, as in the past, played an important part in the '42 movement. Besides Congressmen, revolutionaries also were very active in the movement. The Congress Socialist group also played a prominent part. Notable among them were Jayaprakash Narain, Rammonohar Lohia and Aruna Asaf Ali. The Government made a determined bid to crush the movement as quickly as possible. Besides normal repressive measures, recourse was taken to machine gun and aerial firing. This only increased the people's fury and led to more violent and wider disturbances. In some places like Midnapore in West Bengal and Ballia in U.P., even 'parallel

governments' were set up by the people. But ultimately, the Government succeeded in bringing the situation under its control and the movement lost much of its force. The absence of wise leadership was keenly felt. Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders did not approve this outbreak of violence. The Muslim League, understandably, denounced the Quit India movement. So did the leaders of the Depressed Classes.

Communist  
attitude  
to the  
Quit  
India  
Movement

The Communist Party of India, after the Soviet entry into the Second World War, came to regard the War as the 'Peoples' War' against Imperialism and Fascism. The party called on the people of India to join hands with the Soviet and the British people and others who were fighting for freedom. The peoples' victory was "the guarantee of India's liberation" and the Communist Party emphasised that India's freedom would not come "out of the blood-stained dagger of the Japanese militarists." The Communists naturally condemned the Quit India movement as it was sure to weaken the British as well as Indian war efforts. The 'People's War Policy' also explained the Communist opposition to Subhas Bose and the Indian National Army. The Communists came in for much criticism and denunciation for their role in the 1940s. This caused a serious breach between the Congress and the Communist Party. The Communists were accused of pursuing an anti-national policy. In October, 1945, the Communist Party called upon all Communists to resign from the Congress as a protest against the new attitude taken by the Congress towards the Communists. The party regretted that leaders of the Congress, "our foremost patriotic organisation", had failed to rally the nation for achieving freedom, "in alliance with progressive forces all over the world". Instead of such a policy and programme, the Congress, the C.P.I. accused, was following a course that would "divide and disrupt the freedom forces themselves."

Significance  
of the Quit

The wisdom of starting the Quit India movement was questioned by many. But it

India movement achieved certain objectives. The movement revealed the people's fighting spirit and their desperate longing for freedom. It once again proved the hold of the Congress on the masses. It showed how determined the people were to achieve freedom. No sacrifice was too much for reaching that goal. The movement served as an eye-opener to the British Government about India's attitude to British imperialism. It was obvious that the days of the British raj were numbered. The '42 movement was the apex of the Indian struggle for freedom. It was now crystal clear that the British would be leaving India soon. The question now was how and when. The remaining five years witnessed the working out of the solution of that problem.

### *The Struggle Outside India :*

Bose escapes to Germany While the whole nation was in ferment in the memorable '42, the struggle for independence was carried on by Subhas Bose outside India. His difference with Gandhiji and ultimate break off with the Congress have already been described. The outbreak of the Second World War was considered by Subhas Bose as a golden opportunity to wage war against the continuance of British rule. In July, 1940, he was arrested. After a few months he was released on ground of ill health but was practically interned in his residence in Calcutta. He successfully eluded the police vigilance and escaped out of India to reach Berlin in March, 1941. This dramatic escape and his astounding journey across several countries has now become a legend. Subhas Bose sought to secure German help and promise for India's independence. There he worked to raise an Indian legion. He was hailed by the Indian community in Germany as *Netaji* and was greeted with the slogan "*Jai Hind.*" From Berlin Radio he regularly broadcasted to India urging his countrymen to rise against the British. But he soon felt that South-East Asia would be a more suitable ground for his grand



scheme of raising a national army to free India from the British yoke. Soon came the opportunity he was eagerly looking forward to.

During the war many Indian revolutionaries abroad had founded organisations with the object of helping the end of British rule in India. One such notable organisation was the Indian Independence League founded by Rash Behari Bose in Japan. This organisation was the outcome of two Conferences—the first one held in Tokyo (March 1942) and the second in Bangkok (June, 1942). The revolutionaries assembled in the Conferences decided to form an Indian National Army (*Azad Hind Fouz*) for the liberation of India from British subjection. The army was to be raised with Indians in the South-East Asian countries and Indian soldiers of the British Army captured by the Japanese. Capt. Mohan Singh was primarily responsible for raising the army. A Council of Action was formed with Rash Behari as its President. He devoted himself to the organisation of the Indian Independence League and the I.N.A. on a sound foundation. Shortly afterwards, Rash Behari dismissed Mohan Singh, whose personal ambition endangered the I.N.A., and took over the control of the movement. By April, 1943, Rash Behari had succeeded in reorganising the movement.

The Bangkok Conference, on the initiative of Rash Behari, had sent an invitation to Subhaschandra Bose to come to East Asia. Rash Behari was looking forward anxiously to the day when he could hand over the leadership of the movement to Subhas. In response to the invitation from the Bangkok Conference the latter came over from Germany to Tokyo in June, 1943, after a most amazing sea journey fraught with grave danger. He held discussions with the Japanese authorities in course of which the latter promised the independence of India after the war. He then went to Singapore where he was warmly welcomed by Rash Behari and the latter handed over to

Subhas the leadership of the Indian National Army and the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League amidst great jubilation and enthusiasm. Addressing a huge meeting at Singapore (4 July, 1943), Rash Behari said : "In your presence today I resign my office and appoint Deshsevak Subhaschandra Bose as President of the Indian Independence League.....India's best is represented in him." Rash Behari did not retire from the struggle for independence. Till the very end of his life (21 January, 1945), he remained a courageous and selfless freedom fighter. His relinquishment of power was a unique example in the history of revolutionary movements in the world. It was Rash Behari who prepared the ground for Subhaschandra in the East and South-East Asia. Paying his tribute to the great revolutionary leader, Subhaschandra Bose described Rash Behari as "the Father of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia."

The I.N.A. Campaign      Subhaschandra Bose infused new life into the Indian National Army. He became the *Netaji*, the supreme leader of the *Azad Hind Fouz*, and gave the famous battle cry : '*Chalo Delhi*' (On to Delhi). He worked out a master plan of campaign for the I.N.A. with the ultimate goal of reaching Delhi. A provisional Government of *Azad Hind* (Free India) was set up. Its object was "to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India." It called upon the Indian people "to strike for India's freedom," and "to launch the final struggle against the British and all their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in final victory until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a free nation." The I.N.A. revealed Subhas Bose's greatness as a military leader and organiser. One of the I.N.A. Brigades advanced with the Japanese army upto the frontiers of India. The Indian national flag was hoisted in Kohima in March, 1944. But with the change of fortune in the war and the retreat and defeat of the

**Collapse of the I.N.A.** Japanese the I.N.A. collapsed. There were not a few Indian nationalists who disagreed at the time with Subhas Bose's ideas and plan of collaboration with the Axis group. Yet the patriotism of Subhas Bose was unquestioned. His grand scheme of India's liberation and the idealism of the I.N.A. movement inspired the people in an unprecedented manner. The Azad Hind movement is thus a milestone in the history of the Indian struggle for independence.

### *The Last Phase :*

**Rajaji formula (April, 1944)** In October, 1943, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, was succeeded by Lord Wavell. The war had now swung in favour of the Allies. The change in the Indian and the international situation necessitated a change in the Congress policy. The British Government also showed its willingness to reach a settlement. Gandhiji was released in May, 1944. It was, however, plainly evident that no solution of the Indian problem was possible without the concurrence of the Muslim League. C. Rajagopalachari suggested a basis for settlement which received the approval of Gandhiji. According to the terms of the settlement, the Muslim League was to endorse the demand for independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period. After the termination of the war, a commission should be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population had an absolute majority. In such demarcated areas, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants should decide the issue of separation from India. If the majority decided in favour of separation, the decision should be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State. In the event of separation, mutual agreements should be reached for safeguarding defence, commerce and communications and other essen-

tial purposes. Transfer of population, if any, should be on an absolutely voluntary basis.

The Rajagopalachari formula provided the basis of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks that took place at the latter's residence in September, 1944. But the talks which went on for a fortnight proved futile. Jinnah, adamant as ever, turned down the proposals. He also made it clear that partition must come before freedom. Another attempt to draft an agreed constitution for India was made by a Conciliation Committee, headed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. But this also proved abortive. The deadlock continued. Apparently, the initiative for breaking it now lay with the British Government.

In March, 1945, Lord Wavell went to London to consult the British Cabinet. True to general expectations he came back with a plan which was announced on 14 June, 1945. The statement referred to the Government's eagerness to break the "political deadlock in India." The Cripps' offer of 1942, it stated, "stands in its entirety without change or qualification".

It further proposed that the Central Executive Council would be reconstituted and it should have "a balanced representation of the main communities, including equal proportion of Moslems and Caste Hindus." Excepting the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, it would be an exclusively Indian Council. The new Council will carry on the Government "until a new permanent constitution could be agreed upon and come to force." On the proposals, the Secretary of State, L. S. Amery, said, "We are placing India's immediate future in Indian hands."

Lord Wavell summoned a conference of Indian political leaders at Simla on 25 June, 1945, to discuss the new proposals. But the conference broke down on the issue of the reconstitution of the Viceroy's Council. Jinnah obstinately demanded that all the Muslim members of the Council must be members

of the Muslim League. Such a proposition was totally unacceptable to the Congress which insisted on its national character. Significantly, the chief spokesman of the Congress in the conference was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He firmly declared that the Congress "cannot possibly be a party to any arrangement, howsoever temporary it may be, that prejudices its national character, tends to impair the growth of nationalism, and reduces Congress directly or indirectly to a communal body." The Viceroy came in for criticism for allowing Jinnah to wreck the new proposals. But the British viewpoint, as summed up by Coupland, was that "it cannot *impose*, but it could, at need, *propose* a settlement."

The Labour Ministry:  
Changed policy

In the British General Election of 1945 the Labour Party was voted to power. The new Prime Minister, Mr. Clement Attlee, and the Secretary of State, Lord Pethick Lawrence, were keen on granting independence to India at an early date. The Labour Government had genuine sympathy for Indian aspiration. Besides that there were other influencing factors. Post-war Britain's military power and her economy were in a ruinous condition. The explosive Indian situation and the inevitable end of the Empire in the near future were also weighty considerations. After a brief visit to London for consultations, Lord Wavell made a new policy broadcast on 19 September, 1945. He announced that elections to the central and provincial legislatures would be held in the coming winter and responsible ministries would be formed in the provinces. A constitution-making body would be convened as soon as possible. The Viceroy would, after the elections, discuss the form of the constitution-making body with the representatives of the major parties and of the Indian States.

The Government intended, as the Viceroy announced, to bring into being an Executive Council, soon after the provincial elections, "which will have the support of the main Indian parties." He appealed for Indian co-operation and help in the 'early realisation of full self-govern-

ment in India."

**I.N.A. Trial** The Congress and the Muslim League began to make hectic preparations for the coming elections. In the midst of these the Government instituted a public trial of the *Azad Hind Fouz* soldiers on charges of treason. The trial only helped to rouse the people's patriotic emotion to fever-heat. Till now they knew very little of the I.N.A. movement and organisation. The exploits of the I.N.A., led by *Netaji*, stirred the whole nation and the country was thrilled with excitement. The Congress took up the defence of the I.N.A. leaders on trial and set up a panel of lawyers which included Jawaharlal Nehru and Bhulabhai Desai. The I.N.A. leaders were convicted. But their sentences were soon remitted and ultimately they were set free.

**Revolt of the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy** On 18 February, 1946, the ratings of the Signal School in Bombay revolted against "untold hardships regarding pay and food and the most outrageous racial discrimination." They were soon joined by ratings of other naval establishments. The revolt was possibly influenced by the I.N.A. movement and its popular patriotic strength. The situation tended to take a serious turn before it ended a few days later, 'mainly owing to the efforts of Vallabhbhai Patel.

In the elections to the Central Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures, the Muslim League won most of the Muslim seats and the Congress the General seats. On 19 February, 1946, Mr. Clement Attlee announced in the House of Commons the decision to send a special mission to India. It was to consist of three British Cabinet Members, viz., Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade and A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty. The Cabinet Mission, as it came to be called, was to seek an agreement on the constitutional issue with the Indian political leaders.

Cabinet  
Mission  
Plan

The announcement was widely welcomed in India. By now it was quite clear that Indian independence was only a question of time and finalisation of details. The Cabinet Mission arrived in March, 1945. The members held extensive discussions in conjunction with the Viceroy, with the Congress, the League and other Indian bodies. But no agreed settlement on the constitutional issue could be reached. The League, however, stood firm in its demand for Pakistan while the Congress vigorously opposed the 'two-nation' theory. Jinnah was even opposed to the formation of Pakistan, consisting of the areas demanded by him, if it was to be a separate federation of the Indian Union. In the absence of an agreed solution, the Cabinet Mission announced its own recommendations on 16 May, 1946. The main principles of the recommendations were that Indian unity was to be retained while giving concessions to the Muslim demand. This was to be achieved by granting regional autonomy.

It recommended a Federal Union to which the Indian Princely States could accede later. There was to be a division of federal and provincial powers. There was provision for subordinate unions between individual provinces. Each Province had the right to opt out of the Federal Union after the first election of its Legislative Council under the new constitution. An Interim National Government was to be set up till a new constitution could be drawn up by a Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly would consist of members to be elected on a communal basis by the provincial Legislative Assemblies, and the representatives of the Princely States which would join the Union.

The Con-  
gress and  
the League  
response to  
the Cabinet  
Mission  
Plan.

Both the Muslim League and the Congress found it difficult to either accept or reject the ingenious Cabinet Mission plan in its entirety. The Muslim League, while accepting the plan, reasserted its goal of sovereign Pakistan. The Congress disagreed with the principle of determining the number of members and with the basis of

representation in the Interim Government. On this issue the Congress rejected the proposal for an Interim Government, though it agreed to participating in the Constituent Assembly in order to draft the Constitution. The Muslim League now urged on the Viceroy to proceed with the plan of an Interim Government. But the Viceroy refused to do so in the absence of Congress participation in the Interim Government. The Viceroy intended the Interim Government to be formed by both the League and the Congress representatives. He made a renewed offer to both the parties to form an Interim Government. The League and the Congress widely differed on their interpretation of the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Muslim League now formally withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

The Muslim League observes "Direct Action Day" (16 August, 1946)

On the refusal of the Muslim League to join the Interim Government the Viceroy invited Jawaharlal Nehru—the President of the Congress, to form the Interim Government. The Viceroy's offer was accepted by the Congress Working Committee. The Muslim League was enraged. It decided to observe 16 August, 1946, as "Direct Action Day" to give expression to its wounded feelings and for the achievement of the goal of Pakistan. The day passed off without much untoward incident in most parts of the country. But in Calcutta it witnessed a most shocking out-burst of communal frenzy. The city and suburbs had a terrible blood bath rightly dubbed as the 'Great Calcutta Killing.' Large-scale murders, mob attacks, arson and pillage went on unchecked for the next few days with the connivance of the League Ministry in Bengal.

The Interim Government

The Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in on 2 September, 1946. Shortly afterwards, the Viceroy succeeded in persuading the Muslim League to join the Interim Government. But the League and the Congress members forming the Government could not work as a team. This was only natural because of the wide divergence in their ideas, views



and objectives. Smooth running and functioning of the Government was, as bound to be, seriously affected. The League openly denounced the idea of collective responsibility of the ministry. Outbreak of serious and widespread communal riots, first at Noakhali in East Bengal and then in Bihar, made the situation only more tense and deplorable. Communal riots soon began to spread in different parts of the country like a malignant disease. The brave noble efforts of Gandhiji who went on a peace mission in the affected areas, had of course a sobering effect. But even he could not stop the fratricidal fight altogether.

When the Muslim League members were taken in the Interim Government, it was given to understand that the League would also join the Constituent Assembly. But to the great surprise and dismay of all concerned the League announced that it would not participate in the Constituent Assembly which was due to meet on 9 December, 1946. To find a way out of the baffling situation a meeting of the representatives of the parties concerned was convened in London by the Secretary of State. The outcome of the meeting was, as expected, not an agreement but an announcement by the British Government. It was declared that the British Government would not implement any constitution drafted by a Constituent Assembly unrepresented by a large section of the people, at least so far as the provinces with a Muslim majority were concerned. The announcement elated the Muslim League and Jinnah now found himself in a very favourable position to clinch the issue in favour of a sovereign Pakistan. On the other hand, apprehensions of an impending partition deepened.

The Constituent Assembly met without the Muslim League members on 9 December, 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the President. The Constituent Assembly set on its work in right earnest. But the situation continued to be tense. The Congress demanded the resignation of the League members

of the Interim Government in view of their boycotting the Constituent Assembly while the League from outside continued to press its demand for Pakistan. The country in the midst of all these uncertainties was passing through a curious stage of suspense, fear and expectation.

On 20 February, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee made the historic announcement that the British would quit India by June, 1948, and necessary steps for the transfer of power to responsible Indian hands must be taken within that period. This was a very bold decision.

Attlee's  
announcement  
of the  
decision to  
quit India  
(20 February,  
1947)

Attlee believed that unless a date-line was fixed for the transfer of power to Indian hands, there would never be a solution to the problem. He was strongly opposed to the continuance of the British rule in India for any longer period. It is generally believed that the Viceroy Lord Wavell did not agree with the decision of announcing a fixed date-line.

Widespread  
communal  
riots

Lord Mountbatten succeeded Lord Wavell as Viceroy in March, 1947, to take the necessary steps and to make arrangements for the transfer of power. The historic pronouncement caused great excitement and not a little elation in many parts of India. The Muslim League now sought to strengthen its hold on the Muslim majority provinces. It again took recourse to 'Direct Action' to vindicate and popularise its demand for Pakistan. The result was an orgy of communal riots throughout the country. Communal frenzy and mob violence was at its worst in the Punjab. It resulted in loss of thousands of lives, properties worth millions of rupees and countless of people were rendered homeless destitutes.

The tragic course of events and the grim lessons of the last few months brought the people face to face with the stark reality. Partition had become unavoidable. The Congress, much against its cherished ideal and wishes, had to be reconciled to this solution. But the Congress appeal to the Muslim League for a peaceful transfer of power evoked no favourable response.

Efforts of Lord Mountbatten      Immediately after his assumption of office on 24 March, 1947, Lord Mountbatten started discussions with Indian political leaders. A man with grasp, foresight and understanding, he appreciated the complexity and reality of the situation. So he earnestly sought to work out a practical solution of the problem. He held free and frank discussions with Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other Congress leaders. He was largely instrumental in making them agree to the sad but inevitable solution of the partition of India. It was also accepted that the provinces of Bengal and Punjab would be partitioned on the basis of majority population in the districts.

The announcement of Partition and transfer of power (3 June, 1947)      After holding some more discussions with the League and the Congress leaders, he finalised his plan and got it approved by the British Cabinet. Lord Mountbatten announced the plan on 3 June, 1947, simultaneously with the British Prime Minister who announced it in the House of Commons. The next day in a Press Conference the Viceroy announced that the transfer of power would be effected probably about 15 August, 1947. The important points of the procedure for the partition and the transfer of power from British to the Indian hands were as follows :—

1. If the people of the Muslim majority areas so desire, they would be allowed to form a separate Dominion. A new Constituent Assembly would be constituted for that purpose.
2. In case there is partition, there will be a partition of Bengal and the Punjab if the representatives of the non-Moslem majority districts of the two provincial legislative assemblies so desire.
3. The Legislative Assembly of Sind would decide as to whether its constitution should be framed by the existing or a new and separate Constituent Assembly.
4. "In view of its special position" a referendum

would be taken in the North-West Frontier Province to ascertain whether it would join Pakistan or remain in India.

5. In case of partition of Bengal there will be a referendum in the district of Sylhet (Assam) to ascertain whether the people would join the new province of East Bengal.
6. In case of partition of the Punjab and Bengal a Boundary Commission will be set up to demarcate the exact boundary line.
7. Legislation would be introduced in the current session of the Parliament "for the transfer of power in 1947 on a Dominion Status basis to one or two successor authorities according to the decisions taken under the plan. This will be without prejudice to the right of the Constituent Assemblies to decide in due course whether the parts of India which they represent will remain within the British Commonwealth".

Plebiscite  
in  
N.W.F.P.

The Congress accepted the plan but not without dissenting voices. The Muslim League, though opposed to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, accepted the plan reluctantly. The Partition was a bitter pill to swallow for many who had so long fought with the ideal of secular nationalism and a united Indian nation. The Hindu Mahasabha also strongly opposed the partition of India. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and other Red Shirt leaders were opposed to the decision concerning the Frontier Province. They wanted that the people of the Province should be given the right to opt for a separate independent State—Pakhtoonistan. This was stoutly opposed by Jinnah and consequently turned down by the British Government. The Red Shirts boycotted the referendum when it took place and the plebiscite went in favour of joining Pakistan.

Indian  
Independ-  
ence Act  
(July, 1947)

East Bengal, the West Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan opted for Pakistan. West Bengal and the East Punjab opted for India. The plebiscite in Sylhet district went in favour of

joining Pakistan by a majority vote. In July the Indian Independence Bill was introduced in the British Parliament and was passed without any dissent, receiving Royal assent on 18 July, 1947. August 15, 1947, was fixed as the date of the transfer of power. The Indian Independence Act, 1947, provided for the new Independent Dominion of Pakistan with two wings. Pakistan was to comprise Sind, British Baluchistan, N.W.F.P., the West Punjab and East Bengal. The exact boundaries of the last two provinces were to be demarcated by two Boundary Commissions, each consisting of two nominees of the Congress and two of the Muslim League. The Chairman of both the Commissions was Sir Cyril Radcliffe. In case of disagreement between the members, the Chairman was to give his award. In each of the two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan there was to be a Governor-General, though there was provision for one Governor-General for both the Dominions, if they so desired.\* The jurisdiction of the British Parliament over British India was to cease from 15 August, 1947.

Lord Mountbatten became the Governor-General of the Dominion of India and M. A. Jinnah, the Governor-General of Pakistan. Most of the Princely States, geographically contiguous to India, acceded after prolonged negotiations, to the Indian Dominion by signing the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement with India before 15 August, 1947. This difficult task of integration of the Princely States was accomplished mainly by the efforts of Sardar Patel. The only notable exceptions were the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh.

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan met on 11 August, and elected Jinnah as its President. The Dominion of Pakistan officially came into being on 15 August, 1947. A special session of the Constituent Assembly of the Indian Union

15 August  
1947: Birth  
of Free  
India

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\*The Muslim League refused to accept the idea of having one Governor-General for both the Dominions.

was held at Delhi on the night of 14 August. The great moment for which the nation had wrought so long had at last come. Jawaharlal Nehru in his memorable address to the Assembly and the nation said, "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when the age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity." Gandhiji, as was his selfless wont, spent the days of glory far away from the capital, in Calcutta, absorbed in the mission of restoring communal harmony. The national movement had at long last achieved its goal. The feeling of the nation was one of ecstasy and great expectations veiled with a sense of parting with the millions of brothers of East Bengal and the West Punjab. But that day of triumph of the national movement will remain written in letters of gold in the history of the Indian people.

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